

Britain opens Hong Kong consulate

HONG KONG (AP) — Princess Anne formally opened the consulate that will serve Britain when it comes to be Hong Kong's colony ruler in July. The princess, Queen Elizabeth II's daughter, highlighted the close nature of the event. Anne is likely to be the last high-ranking royal to visit Hong Kong before the handover to China. She is accompanied by Prince Charles, who is to be the first British monarch to visit the territory. The princess, who is 50, is the first British monarch to visit Hong Kong since 1984. She is also the first British monarch to visit Hong Kong since 1984. She is also the first British monarch to visit Hong Kong since 1984.

Seagal to accompany Dalai Lama on Taiwan visit

TAIPEI (AP) — Steven Seagal, Hollywood actor and star of the film "Lone Wolf and Three Bitches," will accompany the 14th Dalai Lama on his visit to Taiwan. The visit is part of a series of trips by the Dalai Lama to promote peace and dialogue. Seagal is a well-known figure in the entertainment industry and has been involved in various humanitarian efforts. The Dalai Lama's visit to Taiwan is expected to draw significant attention and may have political implications.

Skater gets away with licence

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — Because of a legal loophole, a figure skater was able to keep his driver's license even though he flunked a blood-alcohol test. The skater, who is a professional, was involved in an accident while driving. The legal loophole allowed him to retain his license despite the failed test. This case has raised questions about the consistency of traffic laws and the potential for legal challenges in similar situations.

Moonies fight parking tickets

WOODSTOCK, N.Y. (AP) — A group of Moonies has successfully won a court battle to prevent the city from issuing parking tickets to their religious group. The Moonies, a religious movement, have been facing legal challenges from the local government. The court decision is a significant victory for the group, as it allows them to continue their activities without the threat of parking fines. This case highlights the ongoing tensions between religious groups and local authorities.

Jordan seeking details of Croatia incident

AMMAN (J.T.) — Officials said Saturday they were trying to get full information on an incident on Friday where a Belgian corporal was shot to death Friday and a Jordanian soldier and U.N. official were wounded near U.N. headquarters in the last Serb-held area in Croatia. An unidentified suspect was arrested after the shooting in Vukovar, U.N. spokesman Philip Arnold told reporters in Zagreb. The injured, who were also unidentified, were taken to a hospital, he said. Further details were not given. The Belgian, whose name was not released, is the first member of the U.N. international force to be shot to death in Serb-held eastern Slavonia since January 1996, when the United Nations began supervising the peaceful restoration of Croatian rule there. Mr. Arnold quoted a commander of the 5,000-person force, Belgian Willie Hanset, as saying the shooting "has necessitated initiation of control measures. ... the situation is contained." Some 4,200 Belgian troops are part of the force.

Jordan Times



An independent political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation

جوردان تايمز يومية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية. الرابطة

Volume 22 Number 6444

AMMAN SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1997, RAMADAN 24, 1417

Price: Jordan 200 Fils

Baghdad denies moving troops towards Kuwait

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq on Saturday denied allegations that it was moving troops southwards and potentially threatening Kuwait. "There have been no unusual troop movements in southern Iraq," a military spokesman told the official Iraqi News Agency. The official added that there have been no changes "in the normal lines used for training our forces throughout Iraq, especially in the south."

The statement was a response to Kuwaiti allegations on Friday that Iraq was reinforcing units in the south. On Thursday, Iraqi dissident groups claimed that two brigades of Iraqi special forces, or 6,000 soldiers, were sent to the southern city of Basra. Opposition groups in London suggested they were positioned to try to counter anti-government rebel attacks in the area.

Basra is 500 kilometres south of Baghdad and about 50 kilometres from the Kuwaiti border. Kuwait has been wary of Baghdad since Iraq invaded the emirate in 1990. Iraqi forces were driven out of the emirate by a U.S.-led coalition. On Tuesday, a U.S. official said Iraqi forces have maintained a rapid pace of training over the past several weeks, presumably to educate new commanders put in place after a recent purge. The official, who spoke on condition of

anonymity, said the United States was carefully monitoring the situation. Kuwait's Information Minister Sheikh Saud Nasser Al Sabah was quoted by Kuwaiti newspapers on Saturday as saying Iraq had between 150,000 to 180,000 troops deployed some 50 kilometres north of Kuwait. "If they get instructions to move, it will not take them more than a few hours to reach us," said the minister whose country's some 20,000-man strong military is still in the process of rebuilding after the 1990-91 seven-month Iraqi occupation.

"Those who have surveillance systems, like satellites, can confirm it," the military official said, adding that "Kuwaiti allies, such as the United States and Britain, have not made such allegations." "We also have reports that Iraqi President (Saddam Hussein) is boosting his regular army in the south with units of the Republican Guard," he said, alluding to the country's elite fighting force.

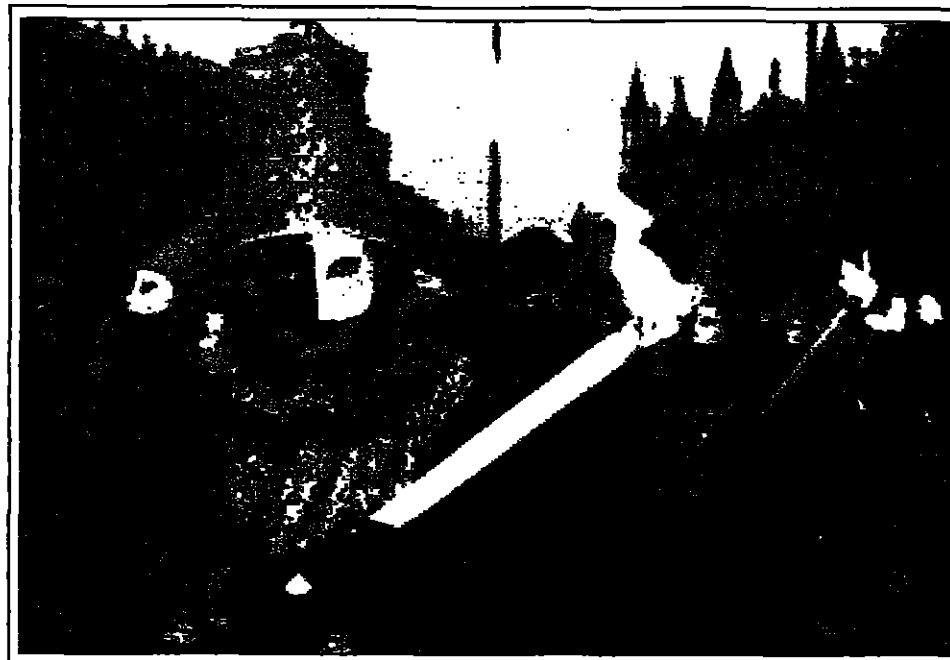
Sandy Berger, President Bill Clinton's new national security adviser, said Tuesday there had been manoeuvres in Iraq recently, but added they were not unusual at this time of the year. The White House also said on Wednesday that it did believe an Iraqi invasion was possible at the current time. Still, the comments did

not appear to be enough to placate Kuwaiti concerns. "Saddam Hussein has rebuilt his forces destroyed by (U.S.-led) coalition forces during the Gulf war. He is in a position to threaten Kuwait," Sheikh Saud said. "If Saddam Hussein decides to commit a suicidal act, which he would be doing, then nothing will stop him."

The official Iraqi newspaper Al Jumhuriya described the Kuwaiti allegations as "test balloons with the goal of creating fear by the Kuwaiti leaders ... leading them to loose control and commit more stupid acts against the Iraqi people."

The paper called on Kuwaiti leaders to "understand that they must work for their own interests and not get caught up in this new campaign," and should instead "correct the errors of the past." A Kuwait newspaper, in rare criticism of the United States since the 1991 Gulf war, meanwhile criticised U.S. statements that Iraq toyed with ideas of invading Kuwait again.

Al Rai Al Aam said in a front-page editorial such remarks by Washington "reflect negatively on the stability of Kuwait and its economy." According to the original no-fly, no-go zone enforced by Western allies in 1992, Iraq can have a total of 60,000 troops south of the 32nd Parallel.



VENICE CARNAVAL: People in masks parade through St. Mark's Square in Venice, Italy, as carnival kicks off on Saturday. Every year all over Italy carnival is celebrated till Feb. 11 (Reuters photo)

Crown Prince urges intellectuals to adopt objectivity, pragmatism while tackling national issues

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Saturday called on intellectuals to adopt objectivity as a fundamental guideline and be rational, cool and pragmatic while discussing issues of national interest.

The Crown Prince also emphasised that the initiative to build civic societies should come from the people themselves through comprehensive dialogue rather than people waiting for others to take the initiative for them.

"Future is what you make of it rather than believing that someone else designs it for you," said the Crown Prince. The Crown Prince, addressing a gathering of Jordanian journalists, writers, artists, publishers and poets after an iftar he hosted for them, called for "participatory democracy where people play the major role in building civil societies."

"Globalism is on its way, but you have to be part of it by taking the initiative to reaffirm your identity and see that Israel is respecting what it has signed."

"So the signing of the Hebron agreement, coupled with implementation, would certainly encourage the Syrians and Lebanese or at least show there is a positive point in getting a deal with the government of Israel," he added.

Syria itself continues to insist that only an Israeli commitment to withdraw from all the Golan Heights will bring it back to the negotiating table.

Mr. Mubarak and Mr. Netanyahu will meet in Davos on Sunday but Mr. Musa said a tripartite meeting including Palestinian President Yasser Arafat was not yet a certainty.

"But if the circumstances allow and the time allows the issue will be the peace process and what next," Mr. Musa said. The minister, in Davos for the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum, said the Egyptian government wanted to tell the international business community that it was ready for integration into the global economy.

"Egypt is open for business, ready to link up with the international economy according to the accepted rules. We are very optimistic about the future and we consider ourselves part and parcel of the international market," he said.

The World Economic Forum organised the third Middle East and North Africa economic conference in Cairo in November and the meeting helped stimulate unprecedented interest in Egypt as a destination for foreign investment.

international law clearly protects the rights of the refugees. In this respect, he cited the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Non-Discrimination Convention of 1965, the Geneva conventions and several regional conventions. "We need a better understanding of rights," said the Crown Prince. "We want a new humane world order."

The Crown Prince pointed out that while Israel is preparing for "final status negotiations with the Palestinians," we are not talking about the present but of the past, the culture of rituals. The Crown Prince also emphasised the importance of Arabs stepping forward to include cultural and religious rights and include them in the realm of human rights as part of an Arab renaissance movement.

"Why should we shy away from cultural interaction with others," said the Crown Prince, citing East Asia as a model with whom the Arabs could launch such interaction. The Crown Prince also

(Continued on page 3)

Israeli pullback in Hebron could encourage Syria, Egypt asserts

DAVOS, Switzerland (R) — Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa said on Saturday that Israeli withdrawal from remaining parts of Palestinian land was the key to better relations with Egypt and progress towards peace with Syria.

Speaking in the Swiss resort of Davos on the eve of the first meeting between the Egyptian and Israeli leaders for more than six months, Mr. Musa said a bad atmosphere in relations stemmed from the initial policies and practices adopted after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu took power last June.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak met Mr. Netanyahu in July but later accused him of reneging on agreements. He refused to meet him again until Israel reached an agreement with the Palestinians on Hebron. "The bad atmosphere was not personal," Mr. Musa told Reuters in an interview. "We had reservations about certain policies and practices but we see in the Hebron agreement (signed last month) and in particular the timeframe for further withdrawals a positive sign that would help change the atmosphere."

"Now we have to pursue actively the rest of the steps of the Palestinian-Israeli track, first of which is to withdraw or redeploy from the villages and the rest of the land of the Palestinians — this will be the key to change," he added.

Mr. Musa said Syria, which has had no direct talks with the present Israeli government, had good reason to be suspicious of Israel's commitment to anything it signed. "But if the Hebron agreement and the annexed one on the next steps are implemented, then the Syrians and Lebanese will

the governments of Jordan and Iraq to supply Jordan with its needs from Iraqi oil at low prices in accordance to a special protocol. "The Iraqi government wanted to revise the protocol to be in line with the new oil prices. Therefore Iraq raised its oil prices from \$15.23 per barrel to \$19.10," said the prime minister.

He said that the new price of oil means an additional burden of \$70 million on the Treasury. However, he said, there is no plan to raise fuel prices.

Mr. Kabariti briefed the committee on Jordan's efforts to lift the sanctions imposed on Iraq since its invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqis. On the Lebanese and Syrian arenas, Mr. Kabariti said the government had sent a memorandum to the Lebanese on the release of three Iraqi diplomats who had confessed the killing of Jordanian Taleb Souheil in Beirut and that another memo was sent on the detention of Jordanian Darrar Karmi working at a Beirut hotel. He said that the Lebanese government replied saying it considered the memos an interference in their internal affairs. Mr. Karmi was released last week.

The prime minister said that Syria was angered by the Hebron agreement and

(Continued on page 3)

Sudan sends mixed signals on UAE bid

KHARTOUM (Agencies) — Sudan on Saturday sent mixed signals after an offer from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to mediate in the fighting in the east of the country.

The rebels, who took control of territory in the east of Blue Nile state in an offensive that started on Jan. 12, said it wanted international backing before agreeing to any deals. Sudanese Minister for Cabinet Affairs Salahuddin Mohammed Ahmad Karar appeared to welcome Thursday's mediation offer telling the independent Akhbar Al Yom daily that the UAE would send an envoy to Sudan shortly to begin the mediation process.

But government spokesman and Information Minister Brigadier Al Tayeb Ibrahim Mohammed Khair rejected talks as untimely saying that Sudan's top priority was to reclaim territory captured by the rebels in the Blue Nile region. "Dialogue is considered by the Sudanese government as a matter of principle, strategy and policy, but now the top priority is given for the liberation of the occupied territories," he said.

And Mr. Karar said his government would agree to a ceasefire only if the rebels could prove they were not being supported by Ethiopia. Khartoum has accused Ethiopia and Eritrea of supporting the Sudanese opposition and deploying troops on Sudan's territory.

Gen. Khair also said Saturday that Uganda had massed troops along the southern border and was

Jordan involved in effort to end Sudan crisis, Kabariti says

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti Saturday briefed the Arab and International Affairs Committee of Parliament on the latest developments in the region and Jordan's stand towards them.

Mr. Kabariti stressed Jordan's support for Sudan in defending its territorial integrity and said the Kingdom rejects any foreign interference in Sudan's internal affairs.

"Jordan is currently holding intensive diplomatic contacts aimed at helping Sudan to overcome this crisis and has been in touch with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in a bid to back its mediation efforts aimed at ending disputes between the Sudanese government and the country's opposition groups," said Mr. Kabariti.

He said that Jordanian and Sudanese officials will exchange visits in the course of coordinating diplomatic efforts "to deal with the crisis and to foil Ugandan, Eritrean and Ethiopian goals in Sudan." "Former" Sudanese Prime Minister Sadeq Al Mahdi asked to visit Jordan but we have not replied to his demand. We are seeking coordination with the Sudanese government for his visit. We will do our utmost to secure the unity and sovereignty of Sudan," he said.

On Iraq, Mr. Kabariti noted that there was an early agreement between

the governments of Jordan and Iraq to supply Jordan with its needs from Iraqi oil at low prices in accordance to a special protocol.

"The Iraqi government wanted to revise the protocol to be in line with the new oil prices. Therefore Iraq raised its oil prices from \$15.23 per barrel to \$19.10," said the prime minister.

He said that the new price of oil means an additional burden of \$70 million on the Treasury.

However, he said, there is no plan to raise fuel prices.

Mr. Kabariti briefed the committee on Jordan's efforts to lift the sanctions imposed on Iraq since its invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqis.

On the Lebanese and Syrian arenas, Mr. Kabariti said the government had sent a memorandum to the Lebanese on the release of three Iraqi diplomats who had confessed the killing of Jordanian Taleb Souheil in Beirut and that another memo was sent on the detention of Jordanian Darrar Karmi working at a Beirut hotel. He said that the Lebanese government replied saying it considered the memos an interference in their internal affairs. Mr. Karmi was released last week.

The prime minister said that Syria was angered by the Hebron agreement and

(Continued on page 3)

is to open embassy in Israel

Nicaragua plans to open its first embassy in Israel, a government official said on Friday. The official said the move is part of the foreign policy of President Carlos Flores, who is seeking to strengthen ties with the nation of Central America. The official said the embassy will be opened in the capital, Managua, in the near future. The official said the move is part of the foreign policy of President Carlos Flores, who is seeking to strengthen ties with the nation of Central America. The official said the embassy will be opened in the capital, Managua, in the near future.

employ 24 jets for pilgrims

Indonesia will send 24 jets to the Hajj, a government official said on Saturday. The official said the jets will be used to transport pilgrims from various parts of the country to the Hajj in Saudi Arabia. The official said the move is part of the government's efforts to facilitate the Hajj for Indonesian pilgrims. The official said the jets will be used to transport pilgrims from various parts of the country to the Hajj in Saudi Arabia.

kills 40 more rebels

Turkey (R) — Government forces have killed 40 more rebels in eastern Turkey, a government official said on Saturday. The official said the rebels were part of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). The official said the government forces were conducting a military operation in the region. The official said the rebels were killed in a battle with government forces.

round off Saudi coast

A cargo ship carrying 100 tonnes of goods has been rounded off the coast of Saudi Arabia, a government official said on Saturday. The official said the ship was carrying goods from various parts of the world. The official said the ship was rounded off by Saudi coast guards. The official said the ship was carrying goods from various parts of the world.

remain secular

Lebanon (R) — The Lebanese government has decided to remain secular, a government official said on Saturday. The official said the government is committed to maintaining its secular character. The official said the government is committed to maintaining its secular character.

Islamic Republic

The Islamic Republic of Iran has announced that it will remain a secular state, a government official said on Saturday. The official said the government is committed to maintaining its secular character. The official said the government is committed to maintaining its secular character.

Islamic Republic

The Islamic Republic of Iran has announced that it will remain a secular state, a government official said on Saturday. The official said the government is committed to maintaining its secular character. The official said the government is committed to maintaining its secular character.

Islamic Republic

The Islamic Republic of Iran has announced that it will remain a secular state, a government official said on Saturday. The official said the government is committed to maintaining its secular character. The official said the government is committed to maintaining its secular character.

Islamic Republic

The Islamic Republic of Iran has announced that it will remain a secular state, a government official said on Saturday. The official said the government is committed to maintaining its secular character. The official said the government is committed to maintaining its secular character.

Islamic Republic

The Islamic Republic of Iran has announced that it will remain a secular state, a government official said on Saturday. The official said the government is committed to maintaining its secular character. The official said the government is committed to maintaining its secular character.

Islamic Republic

The Islamic Republic of Iran has announced that it will remain a secular state, a government official said on Saturday. The official said the government is committed to maintaining its secular character. The official said the government is committed to maintaining its secular character.

Islamic Republic

The Islamic Republic of Iran has announced that it will remain a secular state, a government official said on Saturday. The official said the government is committed to maintaining its secular character. The official said the government is committed to maintaining its secular character.

Islamic Republic

The Islamic Republic of Iran has announced that it will remain a secular state, a government official said on Saturday. The official said the government is committed to maintaining its secular character. The official said the government is committed to maintaining its secular character.

Islamic Republic

The Islamic Republic of Iran has announced that it will remain a secular state, a government official said on Saturday. The official said the government is committed to maintaining its secular character. The official said the government is committed to maintaining its secular character.

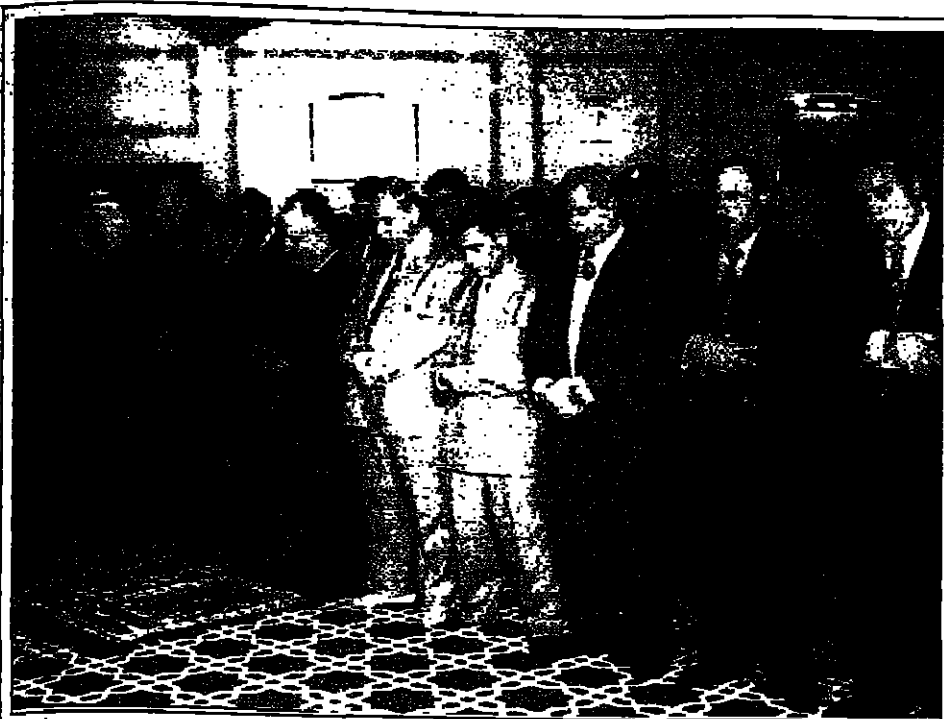
Islamic Republic

The Islamic Republic of Iran has announced that it will remain a secular state, a government official said on Saturday. The official said the government is committed to maintaining its secular character. The official said the government is committed to maintaining its secular character.

Islamic Republic

The Islamic Republic of Iran has announced that it will remain a secular state, a government official said on Saturday. The official said the government is committed to maintaining its secular character. The official said the government is committed to maintaining its secular character.

Home News



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Saturday joins worshippers in performing Al Maghreb prayers before an iftar banquet that he hosted for journalists, writers, artists, musicians and intellectuals (see story page 1) (Petra photo)

Minister to pay visit to Algeria

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheb is to pay an official visit to Algeria later this month to conclude a free trade agreement and sign a health cooperation accord. The accord was initially approved by the two countries last month. Mr. Abul Ragheb and Secretary General of the Ministry of Industry and Trade Mohammad Snaidi Saturday met with Algerian Ambassador to Jordan Hamid Chbeira to review economic and trade links. During the visit to Algiers, slated to start the third week of February, Mr. Abul Ragheb will be accompanied by an official delegation. Last November, Minister of Health Aref Bataineh paid a week-long visit to Algeria to discuss bilateral cooperation in health affairs. At that time, Dr. Bataineh signed two protocols with the Algerian government. The first provides for the treatment of Algerian patients in the Kingdom's public and private hospitals, especially patients requiring heart surgery and those with kidney and blood diseases. The second protocol called for bilateral teams to design a mechanism for implementing the agreement. According to the agreement, Algerian physicians are to receive training in the Kingdom and Jordanian medical specialists would be sent to Algeria to perform surgeries as part of the training. The second protocol stipulated that the two sides would exchange manufacturing expertise in industry, personnel training and carry out joint marketing of pharmaceuticals produced by both countries.

Public institutions to close during Eid Al Fitr

AMMAN (Petra) — Government departments and public institutions will close as of Saturday Feb. 8 and reopen on Wednesday Feb. 12 in observance of the Eid Al Fitr feast, according to an official communiqué issued by Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti Saturday. Eid Al Fitr marks the end of the holy month of Ramadan. Also Saturday, Minister of Education Munther Masri announced that schools will close on Feb. 8 and re-open Saturday Feb. 15, 1997. The minister released a memorandum to departments of education and schools which stated that he took this decision as Wednesday Feb. 12 falls at the end of Eid Al Fitr Holiday and just previous to the scholastic weekend. However, the minister confirmed that schools are obligated to remain open Feb. 20 to compensate the holiday. He maintained that this arrangement will benefit teachers whose jobs are distant from their permanent residences. Eid Al Fitr is expected to commence Saturday Feb. 8, 1997 or the following day.

NEWS IN BRIEF

JBA representative meets with World Bank delegate

AMMAN (Petra) — Deputy President of the Jordan Businessmen's Association Fakhri Bilbeisi met with the World Bank delegation currently on a visit to the Kingdom. He briefed the delegation regarding cooperation between public and private sectors to alleviate unemployment and poverty.

Minister meets with Egyptian ambassador

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Administrative Development Kamal Nasser Saturday received Egyptian Ambassador to Jordan Hani Riyad and the two reviewed bilateral relations with emphasis on matters pertaining to administrative development.

Traffic department celebrates graduation

AMMAN (Petra) — The Department of Traffic Saturday celebrated the graduation of some of its police staff. Department Head Colonel Fakhri Iskandar addressed the graduates and informed them that such courses aim at exposing the staff to traffic expertise and training.

What's Going On

PLAY
"A Night of Fantasy" (Arabic) at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS
Plastic art by Egyptian artist Mohammad Abdul Rahim at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Feb. 6.

Ramadan exhibition from Wadi Dana Nature Reserve (silver nature jewelry, dried fruits) and Jordan River Designs (JRD) ornaments (tablecloths, candles, embroidered accessories) at JRD showroom, Jabal Amman, First Circle (Tel. 613081), until Feb. 10.

Exhibition on the "Institute of the Arab World in Paris" at the French Cultural Centre, until Feb. 6.

Works by contemporary Arab artists entitled "The New Collection" at Darat Al Ayn, Jabal Weibdeh, (Tel. 643251/2), until Feb. 27.

Water authority issues appeal for cooperation

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan Water Authority (JWA) Saturday issued a public appeal for full cooperation with teams attempting to collect needed information to establish a data base regarding homes, companies and other properties connected to the national water and sewage systems. JWA's Director Kamal Zou'bi stated that subscribers are requested to provide JWA teams with documents demonstrating the official registration of the premises, the JWA subscription number, the manner in which they are using their water supply and their full addresses. This information is key to starting a data base and providing full information about subscribers' locations so that water supplies as well as water bills can reach them regularly and without delay, he said.

He added that wrong or incomplete information could inconvenience the JWA and subscribers. Accurate information is also required from farmers and people in the rural regions who are supplied with water through the JWA system. Mr. Zou'bi stated that 25 JWA teams are in the field collecting information and that the JWA initiated this field work due to public complaints for such problems as faulty water metres, delay in receiving bills or being charged twice for the same time period. Water bills are normally sent out once every three months and, according to Mr. Zou'bi, faulty readings by JWA employees were among the subscribers' complaints. The project is being conducted with German technical assistance, he said, and computerisation was deemed necessary as many files containing subscriptions and other information, deposited at municipalities which had earlier handled water supply procedures, were either lost or damaged. Mr. Zou'bi added that the JWA teams will take a brief pause in their work during the four-day Eid Al Fitr holiday and resume thereafter. The JWA teams have heretofore covered 11 districts of Amman.

Department warns of frost formation

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Department of Meteorology Saturday forecast rain for Sunday and Monday as a result of a low depression centred over the north-east of Cyprus.

A department official predicted rain for Sunday night in the northern regions and extending Monday to the rest of the country with a consequent drop in temperature.

He said that temperatures will drop to one degree below zero to one degree at night in the next two days and rise to a maximum of nine degrees Celsius during the day.

He warned against frost formation in the early hours, especially in the hilly and badia districts.

Crown Prince urges intellectuals to adopt objectivity

(Continued from page 1)

implicitly rejected off-heard Arab fears that cultural interaction would allow foreign ideas and concepts to corrupt the Arab society.

The Crown Prince stated that the Arab culture was strong enough to withstand any such penetration and instead it could impart its own value systems and traditions to other cultures. Similarly, he said, it is a wrong concept to see the

Muslim World different from the West or any other part of the world on the basis of religion. He pointed out that millions of Muslims also live in the West and other parts of the world, and, as such, there is no basis for a dividing line in perceptions of the two.

The Crown Prince renewed his call for setting up a national data bank that include every significant element of the history of modern Jordan "from the

Jordanian perspective" rather than letting others cast the Kingdom in their own mould.

In this context, he said addressing the gathering of more than 500 people as "intellectuals," the Jordanian publishing industry as well as media and writers have a major role to play.

He lamented the sad state of affairs in the Arab publishing industry, pointing out that on average every 700 Arabs have one new

book every year — a figure that could not be compared with any other part of the world.

The Crown Prince called for an inter-sectoral approach to utilising resources and addressing national needs, particularly in sectors like water and energy. Such an approach, he explained, will result in optimum utilisation of resources in a cost-effective manner. The Crown Prince invited the audience to

express their views on the subjects he raised and a dialogue followed.

Heard during the dialogue were complaints that the state-run Jordan Television was not doing enough to highlight the Jordanian history and perspectives.

The complaints were countered by writers and producers from the television itself who recounted the many programmes and serials they have produced and are working on.

Jordan involved in efforts to end fighting in Sudan

(Continued from page 1)

voiced concern over the deal considering it a concession to the Israelis.

"The Syrians want an Arab commitment that a zero-base negotiations with the Israelis are something illogical and refused by all Arabs," he said.

"We all stand with our Syrian brethren and support their views that the Israelis withdraw to the June 4 lines," he said. The Syrians were upset with the Jordanian-Palestinian-Egyptian stands, considering consultations among them as an attempt to isolate the Syrians and that is why senior Syrian officials visited the Gulf for meetings with Gulf officials.

On relations with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), Mr. Kabariti said that Jordan and the PNA enjoy distinguished ties based on coordination and consultations at highest levels. The PNA has confidence in His Majesty King Hussein and the Jordanian government's efforts to enable the

Palestinians to regain their lands, and restore their legitimate rights to self-determination and to set up an independent state, he said.

On Jordanian prisoners in Kuwaiti jails, Mr. Kabariti told the committee that no information on this topic was available and stressed that the government was still waiting for information from the United States, Britain, Oman and Qatar in this regard.

"We cannot base our political stand on reports about the prisoners in Kuwait in the media," he said.

He stressed Jordan's keenness on safeguarding the dignity and the rights of all Jordanian citizens wherever they might be. "We will not allow any infringement on citizens' rights in any way," he said.

Mr. Kabariti revealed that he had received a message Saturday from the representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) notifying Jordan that Red

Cross officials are regularly paying visits to Jordanian detainees in Kuwaiti prisons and continually requesting the Kuwaiti government to improve their conditions.

Mr. Kabariti voiced appreciation of the Kuwaiti foreign minister's attempt towards reestablishing normal relations between his country and the other Arab countries, transcending the adverse effects of the Gulf war.

He described Jordanian-Saudi ties as excellent, stressing that Jordan wants to restore Arab unity and solidarity to better serve Arabs.

Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Sa'd Hayel Srour and head of the committee Fawzi Tueimeh thanked the prime minister for his openness and frankness in discussing and reviewing the latest events on the internal and regional levels.

The prime minister answered questions of the committee's deputies and said that democracy means participation by people

and that national unity is a political issue. Replying to a query by a deputy over the recent allegations between deputies in the local press over the question of national unity and allegiance to Jordan, Mr. Kabariti said:

"We allow dialogue that respects national issues as long as good intentions are behind such dialogue. But allegiance to the nation rises above all other considerations."

"Questions pertaining to the refugees and displaced persons fate is being discussed today and will be tackled in the future and have been discussed with all parties involved in the peace process," said the prime minister.

"There is need to hear all the views so that we can create a certain stand which will be put forth for discussion in a frank and serious manner," added the prime minister, who stressed the need for offering ideas in good faith that would help protect national unity.

Sudan sends mixed signals

(Continued from page 1)

believe that it is a positive step but we are surprised at the absence of any interest or mediation in the situation in Sudan from the Arabs," Mr. Dayem said.

The February meeting is due to be attended by John Garang, leader of the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army, former Sudanese Prime Minister Sadeq Al Mahdi and all Sudanese opposition groups, he added.

Mr. Dayem said the situation on the ground, where the rebels have opened a number of fronts to try to thwart a government counter-offensive, remained unchanged.

"The NDA (rebels) is still 30 kilometres southeast of Roseires," the dam in Blue Nile province which supplies electricity to the capital.

He claimed that a thousand troops from the government volunteer militia had defected to the rebel side. The Sudanese government has arrested dozens of opponents suspected of planning a campaign of sabotage and assassinations in the capital, a Sudanese leader said Saturday.

Zairean aircraft carry out bombing raid on rebels

GOMA, Zaire (Agencies) — Three Zairean government aircraft Saturday bombed the centre of the Nya-Nya in northeastern Zaire, a rebel spokesman said.

The spokesman Raphael Ghenda told AFP the three planes from the Zairean army or government allies, carried out the raid between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. (1100 and 1400 GMT) and destroyed eight houses. He said he did not know whether there had been any civilian casualties.

But he added that the attack "had no effect on our forces."

"We strongly condemn these barbaric acts and we consider they are war crimes," Mr. Ghenda added. The Zairean army is using helicopters and small fighter-bombers, based at Kisangani, some 500 kilometres west of Goma, to attack Tutsi-dominated rebel forces who have gained control of a large swathe of eastern Zaire.

The rebel spokesman did not have information on other frontlines.

On Friday, Zairean rebels claimed they had captured the strategic town of Watsa, 500 kilometres north of Goma, as a Zairean government counter-offensive ap-

peared to be faltering.

Rebel leader Laurent-Désiré Kabila also said rebel forces, who have set up their own administration in North and South Kivu provinces bordering Rwanda, were 30 kilometres from Kalemie, southeast of Goma.

No independent source has confirmed the fall of Watsa, but commentators stressed that the rebel leader's declarations had previously been reliable.

Zairean Vice Prime Minister and Transport and Communication Minister Lambert Mende Omalanga said Saturday that Zaire would not ask "anyone's permission to defend itself."

Referring to calls by the international community to begin talks, Mr. Mende underlined the determination of the Zairean authorities "to use military means to end the aggression to which the eastern part of the country is victim."

"It is not Zaire which is making war, it is Zaire which is defending itself," he said.

Mr. Mende was speaking after talks with Burundian Ambassador to Zaire Alphonse Barasira, who reiterated that Burundi had no involvement in the war, des-

pite repeated allegations from Zaire that its neighbours are supporting rebels.

Meanwhile, EU Humanitarian Commissioner Emma Bonino arrived in Zaire to meet officials and visit the eastern city of Kisangani to assess the humanitarian crisis involving tens of thousands of people displaced by fighting in eastern Zaire.

Ben Ryan, a European Union spokesman, said Ms. Bonino was Saturday to meet first with Zaire's Prime Minister Kengo Wa Dondo and other officials in Kinshasa then travel to Kisangani to visit displaced persons' camps.

She will return to Europe via Kinshasa Sunday afternoon.

Fighting between rebels and troops in eastern Zaire is making an already dire situation for refugees and displaced people impossible and could force aid agencies to leave, a senior U.N. aid official said Friday.

Martin Griffiths, U.N. humanitarian coordinator for the Great Lakes region, said he feared large numbers of refugees and displaced Zaireans would be dispersed again and a high number would die.

"I still think it's anybody's guess which way it (the

fighting) is likely to go. The only reason that is of interest to us is to have access to the internally displaced, the Zairean population in the area and the refugees," he told Reuters.

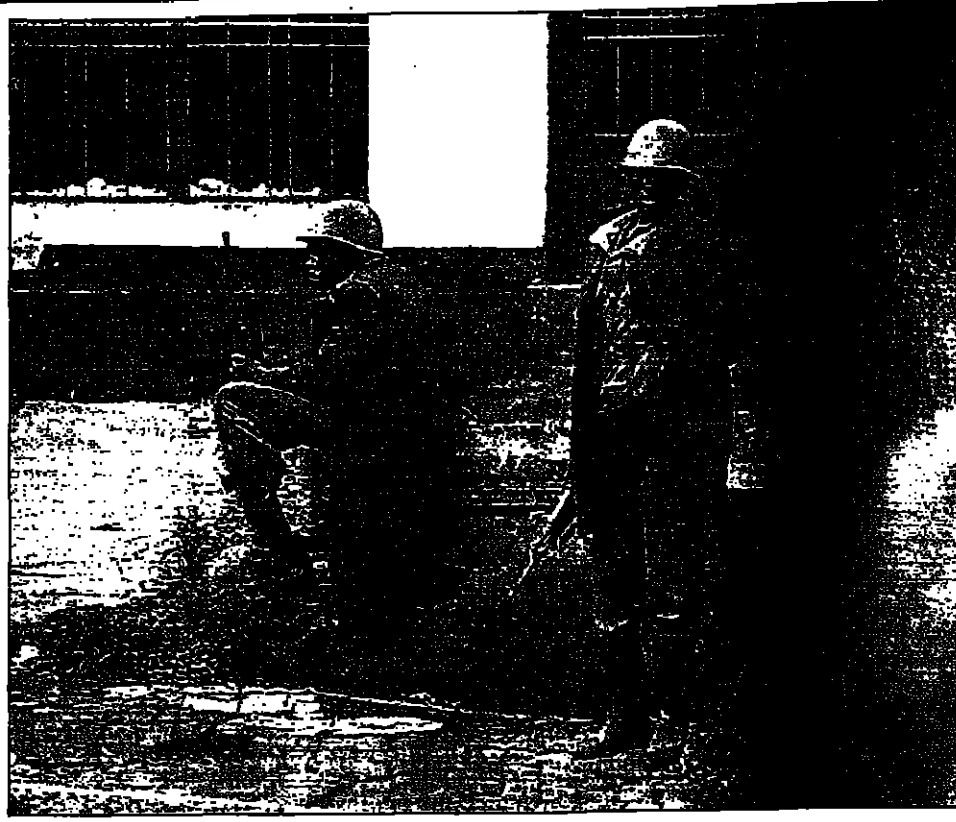
"The already very difficult problems of logistics we had when we started providing assistance in late November have been hugely complicated over the last couple of weeks," he added.

"Access is likely to become steadily more difficult and the result is that all these three groups are not going to receive the assistance they need," he added in an interview in Nairobi.

"In this terrain, this (fighting) is making an already dire situation impossible."

"I think it is not at all unlikely that we will have to pull back from immediate access. We hope of course we won't have to pull out of the area altogether but this is something we have to bear in mind and have a contingency for," Mr. Griffiths added.

"The consequences could be a dispersal of those people... and it is for that reason we will stay in that area operating right up to the day we are obliged to leave," he said.



This file picture shows Zairean Tutsi rebel soldiers standing guard in a Bukavu street on Nov. 21, 1996. The rebels said a Zairean counteroffensive in the northern sector had been "nipped in the bud" and denied allegations that Ugandans and Rwandans were fighting with the rebel forces (AFP photo)

Opposition sets priorities for post-Milosevic Serbia

BELGRADE (Agencies) — A Serbian opposition leader offered Saturday a first brief glimpse of his movement's political and economic agenda if it ousts President Slobodan Milosevic in elections due late this year.

In an interview with the newspaper, *Demokratija*, Zoran Djindjic outlined a three-pronged approach focusing on the dismal state of the economy, democratic reforms and a solution to the problem of Kosovo, an impoverished and restive southern province with an overwhelmingly ethnic Albanian majority.

Mr. Djindjic is one of three leaders of the opposition coalition known as Together, which has staged nearly 11 straight weeks of street protests against the autocratic rule of President Slobodan Milosevic.

The rallies were touched off when the government annulled opposition wins in local elections in November, but they reflect the broader angst of a people who live under Eastern Europe's last Communist-style regime and earn an average of \$150 a month.

On the economy, Mr. Djindjic went into little specific detail other than to acknowledge it is a basket case. He did not say, for instance, whether he would open Serbia up fully to foreign capital.

He said that if his people came to power, they would ask international institutions like the European Union for a "special status" as the country struggles to overcome the legacy of decades of command economy and nearly five years of punishing economic sanctions over Serbia's role in the Bosnian war.

But even economic progress, he said, must wait until democratic reforms are instituted.

"Democratisation first, and then we solve specific problems," said the 44-year-old former philosophy professor.

Mr. Djindjic has a some-

what dubious record as he champions democracy and human rights. He backed militant Bosnian Serbs for most of the war but has since distanced himself from the separatist ideal, a manoeuvre critics have dismissed as opportunist now that Mr. Milosevic is facing the strongest challenge yet to his 10-year rule.

On Kosovo, a flashpoint which some say could lead the Balkans into another war, Mr. Djindjic said the province's drive for independence must be settled "within the framework of the constitution, which calls for autonomy for Kosovo."

Mr. Milosevic stripped the province of that status in 1989 on grounds that it was preparing to secede from the rest of Serbia.

Mr. Djindjic added: "We are prepared to respect the constitution and define through a democratic and tolerant political process what degree of autonomy would not threaten the state and grant real rights to those who are supposed to enjoy this autonomy."

Serbian presidential and parliamentary elections are due to be held by the end of this year.

Serbia's opposition believes time is running out for Mr. Milosevic amid signs that state authority is weakening in the face of marathon street protests.

"They say Milosevic's tactic is to keep buying time — but every day we persevere is a defeat for him and a victory for us — time is on our side," Mr. Djindjic told tens of thousands of cheering pro-democracy demonstrators.

If police tactics were any guide, the authorities certainly seemed confused in handling Friday night's marches — the 76th straight day of student and three-party coalition protests.

Witnesses said about 1,000 anti-riot police adopted a bewildering series of blocking positions in an effort to channel fearful, noisy dissidents towards

their goal, a central square.

At one point police directed the demonstrators to walk on non-existent pavements. In another, they blocked a pedestrian walkway and told marchers to stick to the street itself.

If anything, the sight of police bussed back and forth — only to give up corridors under the sheer weight of numbers — only increased the marchers' elated sense of nearing their goal of forcing the authorities to reinstate opposition victories in local elections last November.

One marcher said to a police officer: "The guy who told you to do this must be very clever."

"He's a real genius," the policeman said with a smile.

Support for the opposition came from an unexpected direction when former Yugoslav Federal president and one-time Milosevic associate Borisovic Jovic told Britain's *Guardian* newspaper that the policy of ignoring election results had divided and weakened the Socialist government.

Three hundred members of the Belgrade Bar Association rallied Friday to demand the resignation of the justice and interior ministers for their role in frustrating opposition efforts to have the election results reinstated.

Teachers are already on strike, about 1,000 schools have shut and deans at Belgrade University have turned their backs on the pro-Milosevic rector.

"Let him (Milosevic) sunbathe in Corfu and write his memoirs, but leave us alone," said Mr. Djindjic. "He cannot realise that the longer he stalls, the more painful the end will be for him."

In Rome, the international community's high representative for Bosnia, Carl Bildt, said Serbia was becoming the "sick man of Europe" with no way out of desperate economic straits unless Mr. Milosevic honoured the opposition's election wins.

New body approves Hong Kong law changes

BEIJING (AFP) — A China-appointed body has agreed to scrap or amend a series of controversial Hong Kong laws, delegates at the meeting said Saturday, in a move which pro-democracy groups in the territory have denounced as eroding human rights.

The preparatory committee, charged with overseeing Hong Kong's return to Chinese sovereignty on July 1, approved the package of changes with one vote against and 10 abstentions, they said, adding 135 members had attended the meeting.

Fourteen Hong Kong laws were to be abolished and 11 modified because they were "against the basic law," the mini-constitution for post-handover Hong Kong, Xu Ze, the director of the Bureau of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs, told reporters.

In a separate move, the committee overwhelmingly decided to empower chief executive-designate Tung Chee-hwa, Hong Kong's future leader, to name members of his government, including judges, and make budgetary decisions before June 30, Mr. Xu said.

It was also decided that Hong Kong's local government — the Urban Council, the Regional Council and district boards — must "cease their operations on June 30."

Provisional committees to replace the organisations would be set up on July 1, with 25 per cent of their membership to be appointed, Mr. Xu said.

The chairman of Hong Kong's Association for Democracy and People's Livelihood, Frederick Fung, was the only member to vote against the law change motion, according to Hong Kong radio RTHK, arguing it was wrong to amend the Bill of Rights and the public order and societies ordinances.

Mr. Fung Friday handed a letter of protest to Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen over the issue.

Among those abstaining from the vote at the end of the committee's two-day meeting here, according to RTHK, was the chairman of Hong Kong's Liberal Party, Allen Lee.

After the vote, Mr. Tung assured reporters that the meeting in Beijing was not a sign Hong Kong was losing its promised autonomy.

What happens in after July 1 "is up to Hong Kong," Mr. Tung said, adding that the system of "one country, two systems" would be observed after the handover.

"Hong Kong people will have a high degree of autonomy. We are the master in our house," he said.

"Western society in Hong Kong is very politicised. I don't think it's good for Hong Kong. I think we have Chinese traditional values. These values have their weaknesses, too. We should combine the two," he said.

He criticised Hong Kong Governor Chris Patten, who Thursday said if the preparatory committee supported the proposed changes it could do "enormous and irrevocable" damage to the territory.

"It's totally not true and not right. He is wrong," Mr. Tung said.

The legal changes were proposed by a Chinese legal sub-group and, among other things, amend Hong Kong's bill of rights and impose strict controls on the freedoms of association and assembly.

U.S. President Bill Clinton has joined the chorus of disapproval.

Earlier, a Hong Kong rural community leader walked out of the meeting in protest against its decision to retain a law giving women equal rights to inherit land in Hong Kong's new territories.

His protest was the strongest yet seen among members of the committee.

Bulgarian protesters frolic, Socialists squirm

SOFIA (R) — Bulgaria's embattled ruling Socialists, rocked by daily anti-government protests and torn by internal divisions, will struggle this weekend to form a new cabinet to deal with a deepening economic crisis.

Students and opposition political parties vowed to press on with a month-long campaign to force the Socialists, formerly the Communists, to call a general election two years early.

Thousands of demonstrators marched through central Sofia for a 26th day on Friday, blowing whistles, chanting "victory" and delighting in mocking the beleaguered Socialists.

Pop singers belted out tunes while thousands of protesters bobbed and weaved in front of Alexander Nevski Cathedral. Black-robed Orthodox priests clapped to the music on the front steps.

Strikes and rallies were held around the Balkan state, which has seen its economy collapse in recent months. The main road and rail links to Greece and Tur-

key were cut for a third day. Students, teachers, nurses, miners, transport and oil refinery workers staged stoppages or colourful protests during the day. Miners appeared wearing helmets with lights switched on in central Sofia.

Students danced through the streets blocking traffic at key intersections for 30 minutes and then moving on. Many students donned firemen hats and burned stacks of now worthless leva in front of a money exchange.

The Socialists, floundering in the face of broad popular opposition, offered to give up efforts to form a government on Friday but quickly retreated to smoke-filled rooms to continue haggling over who would serve in a new cabinet.

Interior Minister Nikolai Dobrev, who received a mandate to form a government earlier this week, told Reuters he now would accept a coalition cabinet formed by President Petar Stoyanov.

"I don't mind if it is formed under the leadership of the president," he said. "I am ready to return my mandate if such a government is formed."

But he then postponed meeting Mr. Stoyanov, apparently under pressure from hardliners in his party. He said later he had to give Socialist leader Georgi Parvanov time for more talks with other political parties.

The Socialists, elected for a four-year term in 1994, have overseen a caretaker cabinet since December when Zhelyu Zhelev resigned as prime minister.

Mr. Dobrev has until Tuesday to form his cabinet and have it accepted by the 240-seat parliament but his task looks difficult.

The Socialists have an absolute majority in parliament but it is also clear that they have little popular support to carry out vital economic reform.

Mr. Stoyanov returned Friday from talks with European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) leaders in Brussels.

He told Western leaders Bulgaria might default on its \$10 billion foreign debt

and he was told in turn that there was no hope of help for Sofia unless it resolved its political crisis.

He also called again for Mr. Dobrev to give up his mandate and accept a brief coalition government to pass emergency economic measures before elections. "The decent exit is really for Mr. Dobrev to give up this mandate," Mr. Stoyanov told reporters.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF), which has been holding up a \$115 million standby credit, wrote to Mr. Stoyanov saying it was ready to help as soon as a valid government was in place.

IMF managing director Michel Camdessus urged Mr. Stoyanov to impress on political parties the high Social cost of delay.

Many economists have told Bulgarians that they are just beginning to feel the effects of their economic crisis, with inflation expected to hit a month-on-month rate of 50 per cent in January and the lev falling in value by the hour.

White House backs Irish parades commission

WASHINGTON (R) — The White House Friday praised Britain for agreeing to establish a commission to try to defuse tension sparked by the annual parade season in Northern Ireland and hoped it would be operating soon.

"The establishment of an independent parades commission is an important and valuable recommendation," said White House spokesman Mike McCurry. "We're pleased that the British government is moving to set that type of commission up."

He added that it was hoped the commission

would be operating in time for the marching season this summer to avoid some of the violence that broke out last summer.

Two people were killed during violence last year which began with a march by pro-British loyalists through a Catholic area in Drumree, 40 kilometres south of Belfast.

The British government's announcement of a commission Thursday followed publication of a report commissioned by the government from a three-man team, headed by leading academic Peter North, on

how to deal with controversial parades and prevent them from setting off sectarian clashes.

The report said a five-member "parades commission," rather than the police, should act as mediators and eventually decide whether marches near Catholic areas should go ahead.

But Northern Ireland Minister Patrick Mayhew said the government needed more time to decide if the commission, should have legal powers to decide whether disputed parades should go ahead. He came under fire from the opposi-

tion Labour Party for failing to act immediately.

Mr. McCurry said the report offered "valuable insights and recommendations to deal with the very controversial and divisive questions that the marching season raises in northern Ireland."

"It's vital for the future progress of the Northern Ireland peace process that new ways be found to bring these communities together and to deepen and nurture a process that holds out so much hope to the people of Northern Ireland," Mr. McCurry said.

Ireland to collate 'new' bloody Sunday evidence

LONDON (R) — The Irish government is to confront Britain with new evidence to secure a fresh probe into the "bloody Sunday" killings of 13 Catholic demonstrators 25 years ago, Irish officials said Friday.

The officials, contacted in Dublin by telephone, said government departments would collate new testimony by an author, a law professor and others and present it to the British government in a bid to get a fresh investigation.

They said bloody Sunday, which took place on the streets of Londonderry 25 years ago on Jan. 30, was one of the topics discussed when Irish Prime Minister John Bruton telephoned his British counterpart, John Major, Friday.

The two leaders also reviewed faltering Northern Ireland peace talks and prospects for a new ceasefire by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) guerrilla organisation in its war against British rule of the province.

The officials said the new evidence would be given to Britain at a regular Anglo-Irish ministerial meeting, the next of which is expected to take place early this week.

The Irish move was made public as Catholics in northern Ireland's second city and elsewhere prepared to mark the 25th anniversary with rallies and prayer and demands that Britain publicly apologise for the killing of unarmed demonstrators.

A march is planned from the Catholic bogside area of Londonderry Sunday to be followed by speeches, one of

them by Martin McGuinness, a senior leader of Sinn Féin, the political wing of the IRA.

Bloody Sunday galvanised Catholics into militant action against Britain and pro-British unionists from the 60 per cent Protestant majority in Northern Ireland.

It also helped swell the recruiting ranks of the IRA and has become a rallying call for Irish nationalists in the British province.

A 1972 British investigation accepted the version of British paratroopers that they had come under fire while confronting a Catholic demonstration and returned it.

The inquiry, by Chief Justice Lord Widgery, exonerated the British soldiers. But Catholics denied that the British troops had come under fire from any quarter and insist that the dead — 14th died months later — were shot down in cold blood.

A book by writer Don Mullen suggests that there may have been at least one sniper on the walls of Londonderry because gunshot wounds on the dead were at an angle of 45 degrees.

He says this is supported by British army radio traffic intercepted by an amateur radio enthusiast. The Widgery investigation only took evidence from soldiers on the ground.

Mr. Major told parliament this week that Britain would reopen the book on one of the darkest passages in Northern Ireland's history if it was presented with new evidence.

Bosnian Muslim general says more war if refugees cannot go home

SARAJEVO (AFP) — A senior Bosnian Muslim general gave a blunt warning to his former Serb enemies that they faced more fighting unless they let refugees return home, a Sarajevo newspaper reported Saturday.

General Sead Delic, commander of the Muslim-led Bosnian army's Second Corps, visited the disputed northern town of Brcko to give his warning, said the daily newspaper *Oslobodjenje*.

"This war is not finished as long as the people do not return to their homes," the paper quoted him as saying.

The report comes a day after Croat civilians outside the southern town of Stolac stopped a U.N.-supervised convoy of

Muslim refugees from returning to their homes in the town.

And it follows attacks by Serbs on Muslims when they tried to return to their former homes in the Serb-held northeastern village of Gajevi last weekend.

Despite promises by both Serbs and Croats at the signing of the Dayton peace accords in November 1995 to let tens of thousands of Muslim refugees return to the homes they fled in the war, the U.N. says only a few hundred have been allowed to do so.

International arbitrators are due to announce on Feb. 15 a decision on competing claims for Brcko between the Serbs and the Muslims.

The Muslims had a pre-war majority of the town's population and are demanding that the refugees are allowed home.

Bosnia's Serbs say the town is strategically vital because it sits in a narrow corridor that is the only link between the eastern and western parts of Serb-held Bosnia.

General Delic, whose 2nd Corps fought for the Brcko area during the 43-month Bosnian war, said he was prepared to do battle again.

"This is not a threat," he said. "If there are no other means then this is the only way to achieve what we fought for over four years."



Chinese Communist Party leader Jiang Zemin on Nov. 5, 1996, addressed the National People's Congress in Beijing.

Pakistani campaign

PAKISTAN (R) — Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto on Saturday launched a campaign to win support for her

party in the upcoming general elections. She said she would continue to fight for the rights of the people of Pakistan.

Ms. Bhutto, who has been in exile since 1993, said she would continue to fight for the rights of the people of Pakistan.

She said she would continue to fight for the rights of the people of Pakistan.

Ms. Bhutto said she would continue to fight for the rights of the people of Pakistan.

She said she would continue to fight for the rights of the people of Pakistan.

Ms. Bhutto said she would continue to fight for the rights of the people of Pakistan.

She said she would continue to fight for the rights of the people of Pakistan.

Ms. Bhutto said she would continue to fight for the rights of the people of Pakistan.

She said she would continue to fight for the rights of the people of Pakistan.

Ms. Bhutto said she would continue to fight for the rights of the people of Pakistan.

She said she would continue to fight for the rights of the people of Pakistan.

Ms. Bhutto said she would continue to fight for the rights of the people of Pakistan.

She said she would continue to fight for the rights of the people of Pakistan.

Ms. Bhutto said she would continue to fight for the rights of the people of Pakistan.

She said she would continue to fight for the rights of the people of Pakistan.

Ms. Bhutto said she would continue to fight for the rights of the people of Pakistan.

She said she would continue to fight for the rights of the people of Pakistan.

Ms. Bhutto said she would continue to fight for the rights of the people of Pakistan.

She said she would continue to fight for the rights of the people of Pakistan.

Ms. Bhutto said she would continue to fight for the rights of the people of Pakistan.

She said she would continue to fight for the rights of the people of Pakistan.

Ms. Bhutto said she would continue to fight for the rights of the people of Pakistan.

She said she would continue to fight for the rights of the people of Pakistan.

Ms. Bhutto said she would continue to fight for the rights of the people of Pakistan.

She said she would continue to fight for the rights of the people of Pakistan.

Ms. Bhutto said she would continue to fight for the rights of the people of Pakistan.

She said she would continue to fight for the rights of the people of Pakistan.

Ms. Bhutto said she would continue to fight for the rights of the people of Pakistan.

She said she would continue to fight for the rights of the people of Pakistan.

New body approves Hong Kong law changes

BEIJING (AFP) — A China-appointed body has agreed to scrap or amend a series of controversial Hong Kong laws, delegates at the meeting said Sunday, in a move which pro-democracy groups in the territory have denounced as eroding human rights.

The preparatory committee, charged with overseeing Hong Kong's return to Chinese sovereignty on July 1, approved the package of changes with one vote against and 10 abstentions, they said, adding 115 members had attended the meeting.

Fourteen Hong Kong laws were to be abolished and 11 modified because they were "against the basic law," the mini-constitution for post-handover Hong Kong. Xu Ze, director of the Bureau of Hong Kong and Macao Affairs, told reporters.

In a separate move, the committee overhauled the chief executive-designate Tung Chee-hwa, Hong Kong's future leader, and named members of the government, including judges and make budgetary decisions before June 30.

It was also decided that Hong Kong's local government — the Urban Council, the Regional Council and district boards — would be replaced by a new "executive council" with 25 members to be appointed by Mr. Xu.

The chairman of the Hong Kong Association for Democracy and People's Liberties, Francis Fung, was the only member to vote against the changes, according to Hong Kong's state-run media.

Mr. Fung said he had a letter of protest to the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He said the changes would "erode the rule of law" and "undermine the basic law."



Pakistan's former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto addresses an election rally in Khanewal. Ms. Bhutto, ousted by President Farooq Leghari on Nov. 5, 1996 is leading her Pakistan People's Party campaign for national and provincial assembly elections set for Feb. 3 (Reuters photo)

Pakistani campaign ends with voters weary of corruption

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Pakistan's election campaign came to an end Saturday without overcoming the disenchantment of voters weary of politicians who are often corrupt and inefficient, analysts said.

The campaign was again dominated by the two juggernauts of Pakistan's political scene — the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) of Benazir Bhutto and the Pakistan Muslim League of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif — which have battled for power since the restoration of parliamentary democracy in 1985.

The elections will go ahead Monday after Ms. Bhutto lost a last-ditch court appeal to overturn her dismissal in November by President Farooq Leghari. Allegations of corruption and misuse of power were cited in the court decision.

Ms. Bhutto's dismissal was a major factor, one Pakistani analyst said. Nevertheless, the analyst predicted Mr. Khan and his movement would be a factor in the future.

"His campaign has had a strong impact and his standing will continue to grow," he said. On the other hand, the ascension of Ghinwa Bhutto — widow of Benazir Bhutto's estranged brother Murtaza — could be a temporary development, another analyst said.



Leader of the Pakistan Peoples Party-Shaheed Bhutto (PPP-SB), Ghinwa Bhutto acknowledges the crowd by making a clenched fist, the symbol of her party, at a packed rally in a central Larkana park. Ghinwa, the Lebanese-born widow of Benazir Bhutto's murdered brother Murtaza, is challenging Benazir's mother for a national assembly seat in the up-coming Feb. 3 elections (Reuters photo)

Major factor, one Pakistani analyst said. Nevertheless, the analyst predicted Mr. Khan and his movement would be a factor in the future.

"His campaign has had a strong impact and his standing will continue to grow," he said. On the other hand, the ascension of Ghinwa Bhutto — widow of Benazir Bhutto's estranged brother Murtaza — could be a temporary development, another analyst said.

"This phenomena created by the emotions raised by the death of Murtaza and helped by parties opposed to the PPP to divide the electorate will have a hard time surviving," said the analyst, who predicted a set-

ting of scores in the Bhutto family. Ghinwa Bhutto, whose husband was killed by police last September, took over the dissident faction of the PPP once headed by Murtaza Bhutto. The killing led to the jailing of Benazir Bhutto's husband, Asif Ali Zardari, on conspiracy charges.

The election campaign has been carried out in relative calm. One death has been reported, compared with more than a dozen in previous campaigns.

But the campaign has been characterised by mudslinging, notably around the "Sita White Affair," after the English aristocrat who claimed at the beginning of the campaign that Imran

Khan was the father of her child. In addition to explaining the affair, Mr. Khan has also been accused in Muslim Pakistan of using "Jewish money" because of his marriage to Gemma Goldsmith, daughter of a Jewish Franco-British billionaire.

Voters have approached the election with indifference, as it wasn't clear until the last week of the campaign that it would even be held.

The Supreme Court waited until Wednesday to turn down Ms. Bhutto's appeal for reinstatement of the parliament and provincial assemblies — as well as reinstatement herself as prime minister.

Ms. Bhutto wound up her election campaign Saturday with a bitter attack on President Leghari.

"He has brought not one corruption charge against me," Ms. Bhutto told a packed crowd in Lahore, capital of Punjab, Pakistan's most populous and influential province.

"This is the man I made president because he wasn't strong enough to make himself chief minister of Punjab," she said.

"This is a man whose father couldn't even win a National Assembly seat and the man I made president as a reward for his hard work after he couldn't become Punjab chief minister, a man I was sure would never betray me," she said.

"Look what he's done," she said at her main rally in Lahore on the last day of campaigning.

Ms. Bhutto said the dismissal of her government on Nov. 5 was part of a plot to drive her and her Pakistan People's Party from politics and charged again that Mr. Leghari was putting together a "king's party" to perpetuate his power.

Islamic organisation claims killing of Algerian union leader

ALGIERS (Agencies) — The Islamic Front of the Armed Jihad (FIDA) Saturday claimed responsibility for the assassination of the leader of Algeria's main trade union Abdoulhak Benhamouda.

"FIDA announces its responsibility in the attack directed against the person of Benhamouda, a man who put himself at the service of the junta," the organisation said in a communique signed by Ahmed Abou El Fida published in the dailies, Le Matin, El Watan and Liberte here.

The communique also threatened to continue the struggle against the government and its allies. Its authenticity could not immediately be established.

Benhamouda, the head of the General Union of Algerian Workers (UGTA), was buried Thursday in Algiers at a service attended by Algerian President Liamine Zerrouk.

A close supporter of Mr. Zerrouk and a sworn enemy of Islamic fundamentalists, Benhamouda was shot dead by five suspected Islamic militants as he left union headquarters in May 1

Square in central Algiers Tuesday.

FIDA, which has several academics in its ranks, specialises in the assassinations of political figures and intellectuals. Several of its leaders have fled to Europe.

In recent months, it has been hard hit by the security forces. In May last year, it lost its leader, Mohammed Brahimi, who was killed along with a dozen companions in their hideout in Hydra, a chic district of Algiers.

Meanwhile, suspected Muslim fundamentalists killed eight people, including a baby, in the latest night attack on an isolated community outside Algiers, Algerian security forces said Friday.

The reported killings capped another week of bloodshed during which the union leader and a retired general were killed.

They coincided with warnings from Algeria's most ruthless rebel movement, the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), of more attacks soon on Algerian figures.

Nearly 200 people have been killed in Algeria since the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan started on Jan. 10, with some Algerian newspapers putting the figure at more than 250.

In their statement Friday, security officials said on the night of Wednesday-Thursday eight people in the farming community of Sidi Kaddour were "assassinated in a cowardly way" — the term they normally use for killings in which the victims have their throats cut.

"This barbarous act did not exclude a baby of 13 months who was strangled by the criminals," said the statement, carried on the official Algerian News Agency (APS). Algerian officials use the term "criminals" to describe Muslim rebels.

Shortly after his funeral of Benhamouda Thursday, killers struck in the western Algerian city of Oran, killing a retired general who had been a powerful figure under two previous presidents.

The site of the killing of the eight villagers lies in Sidi Moussa district, whose provincial capital of Blida is some 50 kilometres south of Algiers.

Blida city is headquarters of the Algiers military district and a stronghold of Muslim fundamentalists who have been trying for five years to topple the authorities.

The massacre followed a series of attacks in which car-bombs and other explosives have blasted Algeria's cities, while axes, knives and guns have left a trail of blood in rural communities.

Algerians residents said Friday the GIA had pasted fresh warnings in the past few days to walls in a working class suburb that is an Islamist stronghold.

"The warnings are in tracts pasted on walls in Hussein Dey," a resident said by telephone. "They are signed by the GIA and apparently were put up just a few days ago. They are threatening soon to attack all Algerian personalities, journalists, film-makers and senior executives."

About 60 media employees have been killed since mid-1993. Journalists work under laws limiting what they can report on security issues and are accused by Islamists of supporting the government.

Hutus target Rwanda genocide witnesses — U.N.

GENEVA (R) — Hutu death squads in Rwanda are killing Tutsi survivors of genocide and witnesses who are forced to move out of isolated areas near army positions and towns in search of security, a new United Nations report said Friday.

The report by the U.N. Human Rights Office said survivors were being hunted down in their homes, intimidated, threatened and poisoned to death in some cases in remote areas bordering Zaire in the tiny Central African country.

More than half a million minority Tutsis and Hutu moderates died in 1994's Hutu-led ethnic slaughter, after which Tutsis swept to power in Rwanda and the perpetrators fled to neighbouring countries.

The U.N. report said at least 227 genocide survivors were killed in 1996 when attacks against them rose sharply and urged Rwanda to take measures to protect them.

In total, the U.N. Human Rights Office in Rwanda received reports of nearly 1,600 killings in 1996, the report said. It gave no breakdown for killings by the Tutsi-dominated army which is fighting an insurgency by rebels of the Hutu majority.

Despite setback, U.S. still hopeful for Korean dialogue

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Washington remained upbeat even though North Korea once again has postponed a key briefing with South Korea and the United States on four-party peace talks for the Korean peninsula.

The United States was "disappointed at this latest turn of events," but the talks, which had been rescheduled for next Wednesday, "remain valid," U.S. State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said.

"We hope to move ahead with the joint briefing at the earliest opportunity," Mr. Burns said. The United States was informed Friday "by the DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) U.N. mission in New York that the North Korean side would not depart Pyongyang in time to attend the joint briefing."

But "they have not informed us that they are unwilling to attend such a meeting," Mr. Burns said, adding that "we will be in touch with the North Koreans seeking further clarifications."

Likewise, South Korea expressed disappointment at North Korea's postponement of the key briefing.

"It is a disappointing news for us that the north again put off the briefing," a Foreign Ministry spokesman said. "We hope that North Korea realises that the four-party talks would be beneficial to it and come to the table soon."

He said South Korea would wait for the north to change its attitude and continue pushing for the four-party talks but would not beg the north to come out to dialogue.

Meanwhile, top presidential foreign affairs and security advisor Ban Ki-moon reaffirmed South Korea's position that the north should not be rewarded for merely taking part in a briefing, Yonhap News Agency said.

Mr. Ban conveyed this position to Sandra Kristoff, senior advisor for Asian affairs of the U.S. National Security Council. She left here after a whistle-stop visit. North Korea had asked for a postponement of the preparatory meeting on a previous occasion, in order to conclude negotiations on grain purchases considered a top priority by Pyongyang.

The meeting originally was scheduled for Jan. 29. The New York briefing is intended to pave the way for North-South talks on a peace agreement to replace the uneasy truce that has governed the peninsula since the end of the 1950-53 Korean war.

President Bill Clinton and South Korea's President Kim Young-Sam proposed the inter-Korean peace talks last April, with Beijing and Washington intending to play a support role to the rival Koreas.

U.S. officials "are prepared to do anything to facilitate" North Korea's purchase of a grain-export deal between Minnesota-based Cargill grain company and North Korea, Mr. Burns said.

Last Month the Clinton administration announced it had licensed the American food conglomerate to sell up to 500,000 tonnes of grain to North Korea.

The license is an exception to the 47-year-old U.S. embargo on North Korea. Minnesota-based Cargill is the largest grain company and third-largest food company in the United States.

Washington would prefer not to go forward with the resolution this year because the two countries have made progress in improving bilateral ties that had deteriorated seriously over human rights, Taiwan, arms sales, trade and other issues.

U.S. calls China talks constructive

WASHINGTON (R) — A U.S. delegation Friday wrapped up "constructive" talks in China but the State Department did not indicate whether Beijing had given any concessions on human rights.

"In general, we've been quite disappointed by Chinese actions over the past year" on human rights, spokesman Nicholas Burns told reporters. But "we've decided not to go into detail" about the just-concluded talks in Beijing, he added.

He said Washington placed more value on action than words anyway.

The U.S. delegation, led by National Security Council Asia expert Sandra Kristoff, discussed a broad range of issues with the Chinese and the talks were "constructive," Mr. Burns said.

"Among the matters discussed were: the overall state of our relations, prospects for the coming year, activities and meetings for the coming year, high-level visits, human rights, law (enforcement) cooperation, the situation on the Korean peninsula and the situation in Hong Kong," he said.

U.S. officials have said one of the delegation's goals was to seek concrete gestures from Beijing on human rights that could be the basis for Washington dropping plans to sponsor in March a resolution at the U.N.

Human Rights Commission criticising China's human rights record.

In the past the resolution has been a source of great tension between the United States and China, which lobbied heavily and successfully against its passage.

Washington would prefer not to go forward with the resolution this year because the two countries have made progress in improving bilateral ties that had deteriorated seriously over human rights, Taiwan, arms sales, trade and other issues.

Karen rebels reject Burma's peace offer

RANGOON (R) — Rebel ethnic Karen guerrillas, who operate along the forested southeastern border with Thailand, said Saturday that they had rejected the latest peace overture from Burma's military government.

Leader of the rebel Karen National Union (KNU), General Bo Mya, told Reuters from Hteet Kaple at the southeastern border with Thailand that the offer was rejected, because Rangoon had insisted the KNU lay down its arms for talks to progress.

Earlier, a spokesman for Burma's ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) had told a monthly news conference that the government was awaiting the outcome of a new round of peace talks with the KNU.

Spokesman Colonel Kyaw Thein said that some influential Karen nationalists from Rangoon were meet-

ing with the KNU leaders to persuade them to make peace with the government.

They had reached the KNU headquarters three days ago and the outcome of the talks was awaited, he added.

Guerrilla leader Bo Mya said the KNU was not prepared to lose its honour during the talks by laying down arms.

"SLORC has sent representatives to ask us to lay down arms to pave the way for talks," he said. "But we turned that down."

The KNU was formed in 1948 to fight for autonomy from Rangoon shortly after Burma gained independence from Britain.

The KNU is the only remaining armed group still fighting Burma's military government and several rounds of peace talks in the past have failed.

This week the KNU and its rival, the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA), a splinter group backed by the Burmese government, have been engaged in heavy fighting that has left thousands of refugees Karens homeless.

Meanwhile, Burma's military government said Saturday it had uncovered a plot by exiled students to create unrest in the country whose capital was rocked by widespread street protests in December.

It also said that roads leading to opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi's home in Rangoon would stay closed until it was clear there was no further threat to her personal security.

A spokesman for SLORC, Colonel Kyaw Thein, told a news conference the government last month uncovered a plot by the Thailand-based student's movement, the All Burma Students Democratic Front (ABPDF), to create distur-

bances.

The ABPDF, with financial backing from certain unidentified international organisations, had recruited Burmese operatives to undertake subversive activities using a video parlour and a photocopy shop as fronts, he said.

A total of 24 people linked to the alleged ABPDF plot had been arrested for trying to organise anti-Burma activities.

ies
bia

square,
direct-
to rent
pave-
ment,
they
walk-
archers
to itself.

the sight
of
back and
up
weight
only
meters
elated
their goal
thorities
to non-victor-
last

and to a po-
guy who
must be

ensus," the
with a
the
opposition
un-
former Yu
president
dissemin-
as-
told
in news-
of mem-
of mem-
had
shaken the
scent

members
Ban Asse-
Friday to
ignition of
of action
in this
efforts to
ion results

already on
1991 schools
at Bel-
have
schools on the
sector

sector can
and were his
in alone."

He cannot
be blamed
the
painted the
om

with national
ch repre-
a Card Bidd-
a becoming
at Europe
of desper-
at unless
nomenated
the
wins

more
me

had a pre-
at the town's
and are de-
the refugees
come.

ies
bia

square,
direct-
to rent
pave-
ment,
they
walk-
archers
to itself.

the sight
of
back and
up
weight
only
meters
elated
their goal
thorities
to non-victor-
last

and to a po-
guy who
must be

ensus," the
with a
the
opposition
un-
former Yu
president
dissemin-
as-
told
in news-
of mem-
of mem-
had
shaken the
scent

members
Ban Asse-
Friday to
ignition of
of action
in this
efforts to
ion results

already on
1991 schools
at Bel-
have
schools on the
sector

sector can
and were his
in alone."

He cannot
be blamed
the
painted the
om

more
me

had a pre-
at the town's
and are de-
the refugees
come.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1971.

Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.

Chairman of the Board of Directors:
MAHMOUD AL KAYEDDirector General:
MOHAMMAD AMADEditor-in-Chief:
GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:

Jordan Press Foundation,
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 684311, 699634

Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Facsimile: 696183

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the
Jordan Times advertising department.

Equality among peoples

THE ROW between Switzerland and Swiss banks on the one hand and Israel and Jewish groups on the other over allegations that Swiss banks kept secret accounts belonging to victims of the Nazi era seems to be easing. The issues that this recent standoff raises would of course still stay with us for much longer: Swiss President Arnold Koller's talks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Davos Friday have apparently cooled down the bickering after former president of the Swiss Federation, Jean Pascal Delamuraz, triggered the bitter exchange when he described persistent Jewish demands to investigate the allegations as "blackmail." However, on Friday, Mr. Netanyahu commended Switzerland after being briefed by its president about measures already taken by his country to address the problem and thanked Bern for "accepting its moral obligations" in this regard. Switzerland has in fact created two commissions to trace Jewish bank accounts and pledged to compensate the victims. On their part, Swiss banks agreed to set up a Holocaust memorial fund for Jewish victims.

While it is gratifying to hear Mr. Netanyahu heap praise on Bern for accepting a moral responsibility towards Jews who held dormant accounts in Swiss banks, we would like to see similar treatment accorded to the Palestinians who not only left dormant accounts but private properties in the land where Israel was created. The Palestinians who fled their homes, towns and cities did so in response to calculated Jewish terror that aimed to empty Palestine from its Arab inhabitants. In quest for a lasting peace in the Middle East, we would like to see Israel accept its moral responsibility towards these people.

Some Israeli politicians say they would only settle Palestinian property rights against Jewish property claims in the Arab World. While every person should have the right to claim his or her right at their country of origin, the rights of Palestinians in present day Israel are not anyway equitable nor exchangeable with the rights of Jews in other Arab countries. There is no way to justify exchanging the property and interests of one Arab people with another. If Jewish people have rights in Morocco or Tunisia or Egypt or Syria, they should call on these Arab countries to redress them. Palestinian property rights stand on their own legally and morally. What gives a greater authority to Palestinian claims for their rights in Israel is the different U.N. resolutions that recognise Palestinian rights to return or be compensated. While we fully support the rights of all European Jews to get redress for all their grievances as a result of the Holocaust, we expect Israel to recognise Palestinian grievances that resulted from the establishment of Israel in Palestine.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Ra'i Saturday urged the government to heed the warning of Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Hashem Dabbas against the dangers inherent in the radioactive leaks from the Israeli Dimona nuclear reactor. In an interview with Shihaan Weekly, the minister disclosed that Jordan has referred this question to the Arab League and sought United Nations assistance in stopping this danger to its citizens, noted Samir Qatani. The writer quoted the minister as expressing hope that the International Atomic Energy Agency will overcome Israel's objections to inspection of its nuclear facilities and address the situation by helping to prevent further leaks that endanger Jordanian people's lives. Referring to the Jordan-Israel peace treaty, the writer said it provided for measures to be taken to address pollution, especially dangerous pollution. He said the Jordanian government is duty bound to insist that the treaty's provisions be carried out in full and so avert serious danger to the Jordanians' lives and safeguard national security.

A WRITER for Al Dustour attacked the Kuwaiti prison authorities which were reported to have abused their powers and mistreated the Jordanian detainees in Kuwaiti jails. Khairi Mansour said all that the prisoners did was to request that they be treated like their Kuwaiti mates and have their basic human rights respected, but what they got in return was brutal beating that ended with scores of them in hospital. The writer said that the Kuwaiti prison guards resorted to beating and inhumanly treating the prisoners during the Holy Month Ramadan, when people should show a greater measure of tolerance and complacency towards one another rather than brutality. The beating of the prisoners, said the writer, proves beyond any shade of doubt that the Kuwaitis are full of hatred towards the Jordanian citizens who had built modern Kuwait through hard and diligent work over the past decades. He said that six years have elapsed since the Desert Storm, that followed Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, but it seems that the Kuwaitis are determined to carry on hating and that is why they committed this crime against helpless prisoners.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

CBJ opts for costly policy

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

THE CENTRAL Bank of Jordan (CBJ) is still making an unnecessary transfer of over JD 50 million a year in favour of commercial and investment banks as a price for withdrawing some JD 600 million from the banking system's excess liquidity. It is doing so by selling its Certificates of Deposits (CDs) in dinars to the banks with an interest rate as high as 9.5 per cent, while allowing banks to liquidate those CDs at any time, with a negligible penalty.

This is not to argue the merits of further squeezing the liquidity of the economy; I shall deal with this as granted. I also agree fully that central banks should not be managed in a way to realise maximum profits. Central banks admittedly are meant to conduct the right monetary policy even if there is a reasonable price to be paid. What I disagree with is the choice of the costly instrument adopted to achieve the desired objective while other no-cost instruments are available to withdraw excess liquidity and, at the same time, prod banks' managers to follow prudent and sound policies.

The alternative instrument which CBJ adamantly refused so far to apply is gradually raising the ratio of cash reserves which banks are required by law to maintain with CBJ without interest. The current ratio is 14 per cent and the CBJ is authorised by law to change the ratio up or down, provided it does not exceed 35 per cent of deposits

in each bank.

The Central Bank argues that it is committed to conducting its monetary policy to influence the level of liquidity only by indirect means. Hence it refrains from using the compulsory cash reserve tool as an instrument of monetary policy, even though this instrument is practically and scientifically recognised worldwide. CBJ claims that central banks ceased to use cash reserve as an instrument of monetary policy, and that Jordan's International Monetary Fund (IMF) economic adjustment programme prohibits its use.

I am also of the opinion that indirect instruments are preferable to direct instruments in the conduct of monetary policy whenever the first is feasible. Nor do I claim that changing requirements of banks' cash reserve is the ideal instrument in all circumstances; I nevertheless think that it should be used under the pressure of public interest and practical circumstances.

When Michel Camdessus, the director general of the IMF, was in Amman last month, I asked him personally about his position on the subject. His answer was that the IMF does not encourage central banks to use direct intervention as a habit, but the IMF has nothing against it and the Central Bank of Jordan is definitely free, if necessary, to increase cash reserve requirements without violating

the programme or even having to consult with the IMF about it.

It is therefore clear that this determined stand of CBJ, which costs dearly in public funds and converts its usual profits to heavy losses, as happened in 1996, is an option which it can abandon.

While I am on the subject, I would like to mention that the Israeli central bank decided last week to raise the ratio of cash reserves of all banks operating in Israel by a full 5 percentage points in order to withdraw a huge amount of excess liquidity and bring the double digit inflation rate in Israel — 10.6 per cent — to a lower rate in 1997.

No one claims that the Jordanian banking system is more advanced and developed than the system of Israel. By the way, the IMF has decided to upgrade Israel to the list of industrial countries as of April 1997, along with South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Industrial countries up to now are 23 and, with the new additions, they will be 28.

The Central Bank of Jordan should not go on giving away public funds to the lucky and spoiled banks at the expense of incurring heavy losses. Otherwise, CBJ will become another financially troubled institution, with lots of valueless assets carried in its balance sheet.

'Support of democratic ideals is a barometer for future Palestinian-Israeli interaction'

By Dr. Kenneth W. Stein

PALESTINIAN SOCIETY is in transition. Inside and outside the territories a majority of Palestinians are moving from confrontation to coexistence with Israel. As the process unfolds, political attitudes are divided. Ironies and contradictions abound.

Vis-à-vis Israel, Palestinian political power is limited.

Virtually alone, Israelis wield the power to decide the dimensions of future Palestinian self-rule. As the Hebron agreement proved, only when Israel's domestic political scene is ripe are Palestinians able to partake in what remains on the negotiating table. Recent announcement of a Likud-Labour consensus outline for the future Palestinian territory adds proof to the supposition that Israelis first negotiate with themselves, and then in no particular order, through the Americans, with Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinians.

Expectedly, Palestinian yearnings are stymied. For them, Israel's pace is too stodgy and no Palestinian state is offered. Notwithstanding past and perhaps future Palestinian attacks against Israelis, firm evidence indicates that Palestinians are increasingly committed to liv-

ing alongside Israel. Where Israel was once the sole antagonist, Palestinians critically view their own leaders and institutions as obstacles to progress.

Among 1,307 recently polled Palestinians, support for the peace process rose from 70 per cent three months ago to 79 per cent, despite a concurrent rise in support for armed attacks against Israel from 22 per cent to 40 per cent. In January 1994, only 50 per cent of the Palestinians surveyed supported negotiations with Israel.

The Palestinian public expressed concern and criticism regarding the status of democracy: 52 per cent said that it is impossible to criticise the Palestinian Authority without fear and only 28 per cent think that the Palestinian press is free. Only 36 per cent think that Palestinians are headed toward democratic rule, while 44 per cent of the respondents have a positive evaluation of the transition to democracy.

Among admired democracies, Israel's status (78 per cent) is ranked higher than the United States (68 per cent), France (60 per cent), with Jordan and Egypt each at 34 per cent. Palestinians place their own status of democracy and human rights under the Palestinian authority at 44 per cent.

These are among some Palestinians attitudes culled from reputable polling data, assembled by the Nabhus-based Centre for Palestine Research and Studies.

"From the data and other sources, it appears that Palestinians are in search of leadership that is responsive, responsible, capable of solving their problems, nationalistic but relatively non-ideological, free of corruption and nepotism, and capable of implementing democratic values."

Major support for the funding of that Centre comes from the International Republican Institute, an organisation affiliated with the Republican Party, which like its counterpart, the National Democratic Institute, promotes democratic values abroad.

Useful policy snapshots may be formed from the Centre's twenty-five public opinion surveys conducted in the West Bank and Gaza Strip over the last three years.

A year has passed since Palestinians elected a president and Legislative Council. Initial hopes for real democracy have faded quickly.

Displeasure with elected leaders and institutions prevails. The institution of the presidency (Arafat) holds the highest performance evaluations (76 per cent) followed by

police and security services (72 per cent) and lastly the Legislative Council (50 per cent). Of all the respondents, 92 per cent say that they have never had any contact with

idents, B.A. degree holders and professionals.

Since January 1994, significant changes in political affiliation have occurred. Then, Hamas, Islamic Jihad and

swayed in favor or against policies dependent upon whether their economic well-being and national aspirations are sufficiently satisfied.

From the data and other sources, it appears that Palestinians are in search of leadership that is responsive, responsible, capable of solving their problems, nationalistic but relatively non-ideological, free of corruption and nepotism, and capable of implementing democratic values.

Despite Israel's periodic chapters of political corruption and influence peddling, its democratic model remains admired by a majority of Palestinians. Support of democratic ideals is a barometer for future Palestinian-Israeli interaction: rarely do democracies physically attack other democracies.

The writer, professor of Near Eastern history and political science at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, is Middle East Fellow of the Carter Centre.

LETTERS

The price of free expression

To the Editor:

I AM once again deeply dismayed to see Jordanian journalists being arrested and dragged before judges for things which they have printed. I am of course referring to the case of the editor-in-chief of the weekly "Abed Rabbo" as reported in the article "Editor-in-chief of tabloid arrested at home" (Jordan Times, Jan. 29, 1997).

As an intelligent reader, I tend to discount most of what "Abed Rabbo" prints as being very close to nonsense. As regards the allegedly slanderous material for which the editor was arrested, I have no comment, since I have not read it.

However, the more important point is that the constant interference by the government in the work of journalists and the harsh "Press and Publications Law" are not consistent with democracy.

In a democracy, public figures and politicians choose to put themselves in the public eye. They can therefore expect that they will be the subject of public scrutiny which will sometimes be hurtful and sometimes even false. This is the price one pays for free expression because it is also the guarantee that when there is genuine wrong-doing, it can be exposed. In cases where persons feel they have been libelled or slandered, they should have the right to bring a private, civil lawsuit. The matter should not be a criminal case where the state prosecutor can actually detain someone. Civil law is usually enough in democracies to maintain accountability by the press. The government should only act when vital national security interests are at stake. The allegations at issue in "Abed Rabbo" hardly fall into that category.

Living in the United States, I am surrounded by untold mounds of rubbish printed daily in the newspapers or on TV, the radio and the Internet. There are stories and accusations about politicians, businesspersons, celebrities and private citizens that are offensive, entertaining, harmful, harmless and just downright insulting to the intelligence of the public. Much of this stuff makes "Abed Rabbo" look tame and dull. And most days the sky does not fall down.

If the U.S. government set about arresting all the perpetrators, there would be tens of millions of people in jail. Of course this is impossible anyway, since the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution protects the freedom of speech.

As a Jordanian, I have to admit that our press, especially the weekly tabloids, is not much to be proud of when you compare it to other countries. But I have faith that it will develop with experience and time if, and only if, journalists — the good, the bad and the terrible — are free to practise their profession and to make errors without fear of being thrown in jail.

Ali Ahumiah,
Chicago,
U.S.

Zaire: Eastern promise?

By Gwynne Dyer

IT HAS been three months since rebels seeking to overthrow the 31-year rule of President Mobutu Sese Seko seized the whole eastern border of Zaire. Everybody wants to see Mobutu gone (except those who live on his bribes and favours), but everybody fears what might happen in Africa's biggest French-speaking country after he goes.

It has been one month since Mobutu came home from a lengthy absence in southern France recovering from prostate surgery. He promptly appointed Zaire's closest approach to a professional military commander, General Mahale Leiko Bokongo, to reconquer the east.

Given the venal incompetence of Mobutu's regime and the total uselessness of its army (whose rarely paid, ill-trained troops paused only to loot during their panicky retreat from the east), everybody knew the next item on the agenda: white mercenaries.

Sure enough, just as Mobutu was heading back to one of his European palaces for a well-earned rest in early January, the first reports surfaced of a "white legion" taking shape in the north-east Zairian city of Kisangani. And this is not a belated has-beens like old Bob Denard, trying to take over the Comoro Islands for the umpteenth time with a script written by the ghost of Graham Greene.

What has been assembling in Kisangani is four or five hundred genuine hard men — ex-French Foreign Legion, ex-

British SAS, Belgians and South Africans who have had steady work in Africa for years — plus some armour and artillery, transport helicopter, and even three ex-Soviet Mi-24 helicopter gunships.

Even Mobutu's stolen billions cannot buy this calibre of help unless some friendly government gives him the nod. The French deny it, but in fact they have always backed Mobutu, despite the fact that he has comprehensively ruined his country. Why? Because he always does what they want — and, above all, he speaks French.

Last weekend, the "white legion" started moving east to chase the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (AFDL) from their forward positions at Bunia and Walikale. The force's final objective is to take back the big eastern cities of Goma, Bukavu and Uvira on the Great Lakes frontier with Rwanda and Burundi, and most observers thought it would take about two weeks.

It is deeply embarrassing. A full generation after most African countries got their independence, it is still quite normal for a bunch of white hired guns working for some African thug to fly in, kill his opponents and impose his will on a whole country.

So here we go again — except that the first reports out of eastern Zaire suggest that this time the "white legion" is not doing so well. Despite all the high-tech mayhem the mercenaries can dispense, the AFDL troops are holding

around Bunia and Walikale.

Nobody who knows the record of African troops in the two world wars — or, for that matter, of warrior tribes like the Zulus — can doubt the courage or military prowess of well-led, professional African soldiers. The problem is that for the past few decades, there have been very few of that kind of African soldiers around.

What we are now beginning to see, in the very region that saw the worst of Africa's recent tragedies, is the emergence of disciplined, professional African armies. They are semi-guerrilla forces with few heavy weapons, and their uniforms leave much to be desired, but they are commanded by people who combine military skills with political integrity, and they are getting the job done.

The first of these armies to win was the one trained and led by Uganda's current president, Yoweri Museveni (who owes his surname to the fact that his father served in the Seventh Battalion of the King's African Rifles). Museveni is much more than a professional soldier, but without those military skills he could not have put an end to Uganda's two decades of agony.

After 30 years of war, both Eritrea and Ethiopia are at peace today because other disciplined guerrilla armies, led by people who understood both military tactics and political principle, finally drove the thugs and bandits from power. And they never, ever, asked for help from foreigners, whether mercenaries or regular troops.

The most recent of these new, clean, competent African

armies to begin righting wrongs was the Rwanda Patriotic Front, the mostly Tutsi force that marched in and stopped the anti-Tutsi genocide in Rwanda two years ago. The great shock for outsiders was that it did not carry out a counter-genocide in retaliation. But then it was trained in Uganda, and its commander, Paul Kagame, is a close colleague of Yoweri Museveni.

Now we have two more instances. Both Eritrea and Ethiopia are tacitly backing the Sudanese People's Liberation Army offensive that seeks to free Sudan from the rule of a brutally oppressive and sectarian government. And both Uganda and Rwanda are tacitly backing the AFDL's attempt to drive Mobutu from power in Zaire.

The Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire falls into the same category. It is not a tribal uprising. The bulk of its early recruits in eastern Zaire last year were Tutsis, but its leader, Laurent Kabila, is from the southern province of Shaba (formerly Katanga), and he has been struggling against Mobutu's rule since 1965.

Kabila's military commander, Andre Kissasse Ngandu, killed last week in an ambush, was not Tutsi either. Indeed, he came from Kasai province, which now shelters about a million refugees who went to Shaba long ago seeking work, only to be driven out by a bout of ethnic cleansing three years ago.

The AFDL is not Kasalian, or Shaban, or Tutsi, and it is not about breaking up Zaire. It is

and

By Daphne Barak

Q: I have been reading your article about the price of free expression. I am a journalist and I am very interested in the issue. I would like to know if you have any suggestions for how to improve the situation in Jordan.

A: I am glad to hear that you are interested in the issue. I think that the situation in Jordan is very complex and there are many factors that contribute to it. I think that the most important thing is to have a free press and to have a government that is accountable to the people. I think that the government should be more transparent and should be more open to criticism. I think that the press should be more independent and should not be afraid to speak the truth. I think that the people should be more educated and should be more aware of their rights and responsibilities. I think that the situation in Jordan will improve if all these things are done.

Q: I have been reading your article about the price of free expression. I am a journalist and I am very interested in the issue. I would like to know if you have any suggestions for how to improve the situation in Jordan.

A: I am glad to hear that you are interested in the issue. I think that the situation in Jordan is very complex and there are many factors that contribute to it. I think that the most important thing is to have a free press and to have a government that is accountable to the people. I think that the government should be more transparent and should be more open to criticism. I think that the press should be more independent and should not be afraid to speak the truth. I think that the people should be more educated and should be more aware of their rights and responsibilities. I think that the situation in Jordan will improve if all these things are done.

Q: I have been reading your article about the price of free expression. I am a journalist and I am very interested in the issue. I would like to know if you have any suggestions for how to improve the situation in Jordan.

A: I am glad to hear that you are interested in the issue. I think that the situation in Jordan is very complex and there are many factors that contribute to it. I think that the most important thing is to have a free press and to have a government that is accountable to the people. I think that the government should be more transparent and should be more open to criticism. I think that the press should be more independent and should not be afraid to speak the truth. I think that the people should be more educated and should be more aware of their rights and responsibilities. I think that the situation in Jordan will improve if all these things are done.

Arabs top world's food importers despite vast land

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab states account for more than half the world's net imports of farm products although they have enough arable land and less than five per cent of the global population, official figures have showed.

The 22-member Arab League imported an average \$18 billion worth of farm products annually over the past five years, 60 per cent of the world's net imports of \$30 billion, the Arab Monetary Fund (AMF) said.

In contrast, their farm exports remained as low as \$5.5 billion per year, a

fraction of the worldwide food exports of \$525 billion.

The large gap between their farm imports and exports has cost Arab countries more than \$180 billion over the past 15 years.

Between 1990 and 1995, the cumulative Arab food deficit reached a staggering \$50 billion, the Abu Dhabi-based fund said in a study, quoting the official Arab Corporation for Agricultural Development.

The gap covered all farm products, with cereals accounting for nearly half despite efforts to increase

the area of such crops.

The report showed Saudi Arabia and its partners in the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) remained the biggest food importers in the Arab World, accounting for nearly a half of the total farm purchases.

Experts said the GCC, which also groups Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), remained heavily reliant on imported agricultural products because of their arid desert land.

But the six members, which control nearly 45 per cent of the world's proven

oil reserves, have pumped billions of dollars into agricultural projects and subsidies to encourage farmers.

Although they have reported a sharp expansion in their cultivated areas, production still far lags behind population growth.

The GCC nations have also been reluctant to invest in the farming sector in such fertile countries as Sudan, Iraq and Lebanon because of wars.

Lack of investment has remained one of the main reasons for the poor performance of the agricultural sector in the Arab World.

"The farming sector still

lacks interest by Arab investors as they prefer trade, services, industry and other economic activities," the AMF said.

It gave no figures for such investments but in previous years they did not exceed \$2 billion compared with the overall capital of more than \$100 billion invested annually by the Arab public and private sectors.

The lack of funds has combined with inadequate government farm policies, the absence of incentives for farmers and water shortages to keep the cultivated land as low as one

third of the total arable land of 198 million hectares (close to 500 million acres).

"Apart from the shortages in water resources, the Arab water sector is suffering from the poor performance of the institutions which manage water resources as well as lack of modern irrigation techniques," the report said.

Experts warned the Arab food gap could deteriorate in the coming years unless governments spur higher growth in the farming sector by expanding cultivated areas and increasing food exports.

They noted the agricultural sector, which accounted for 13 per cent of the Arab gross domestic product of \$528.7 billion in 1995, was growing by less than two per cent while the Arab population was rising by four per cent.

"Arab states have enough land to feed not only their people but other countries as well. Without efforts to utilise their land, their food gap will continue to widen," a Gulf-based farm expert warned.

This means they will depend more on imported food, which has serious implications on their security.

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You'll have some really excellent ideas today for improving your lot in life, so make the best effort to pursue your dream. Dress ideally for enjoying new interests later this evening, and impress some influential people.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Before taking off today to see old close friends and making new ones, first try to improve the conditions at home. When you return, let your loved ones know that home is where your heart is and you wish to stay there.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Handle personal correspondence today and be careful about how you phrase things and thereby avoid any difficulties. Work on improving the home situation and inviting some friends in could help you to be successful.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Try to get most of your career activities out of the way early today, as you have an inspiration which will take up some time in the days ahead. Be kind to your mate later this evening and do something special for him or her.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Try to help a clever fellow associate today who has bitten off more than he or she can chew. The two of you later this evening, working together, can make great fellow associates and achieve a great deal of success.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Find a way today to make your activities more productive, which will display your talents to those who are in a position to help you. Enjoy a relaxing hobby later this evening and thereby become prepared for another week.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Get into the details of a new project this afternoon which you hadn't noticed before. Ignoring these could lead to a difficult situation. Your mate will do something to please you, so respond to his or her gesture.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Labour on improving your credit today, which is not as well as you may have thought. Delay handling a personal difficulty later in the day and thereby make your career activities successful. Drive very cautiously.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Get some advice today from a close friend who has had very diverse experiences. This person can help you greatly in your career activities. A new and profitable opportunity will arise which will become quite successful.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Try to build more accord with your loved one this morning. Some interesting people you encounter today can be of great help to your career activities. Do some reading later this evening and develop a good course of action.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) A fellow associate will be unusually willing to go along with your ideas today, however don't be suspicious with his or her intentions. Show your appreciation for this support, and you can get along better.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Take any health treatments today you may need. Don't let any physical difficulties pass by without attention, as they'll only reappear. You can have quite a good time later this evening with your loved ones.

Birthstone of February: Amethyst — Onyx.

Annan warns poverty means instability

DAVOS, Switzerland (R) — Only greater and fairer economic development can secure international peace, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan said Saturday.

Speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos, he said the search for greater stability needed a broader definition of what international security meant.

"Lasting peace involves more than the intervention of blue helmets (U.N. troops). We cannot be secure amidst starvation," the former Ghanaian diplomat told the annual gathering, attended by political and business leaders from around the world.

"If the private sector does not deliver economic growth and economic opportunity — equitably and sustainably — around

the world, then peace will remain fragile and social justice a distant dream," he said.

Mr. Annan, who took over from Boutros Ghali in December, said that, while governmental aid by the rich to the poor nations remained vital, it was the private sector that had the biggest part to play.

The great ideological battles of the past had been resolved and market capitalism had won the day. But the challenge for the corporate sector was to show that it had been a worthy victor.

"Market capitalism has no major ideological rival. Its biggest threat is from within itself. If it cannot promote both prosperity and justice, it will not have succeeded," Mr. Annan said.

Calling for a new partnership between government,

international agencies and business, Mr. Annan said that the corporate sector must see that profit and development of the world's poorest nations could go hand-in-hand.

"Strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and the private sector will be one of the priorities of my term," he said.

Mr. Annan, who was due to hold an exhausting round of meetings with government officials, including Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, during the conference at this Swiss mountain resort, said that much had already been done by the private sector.

Private capital flows to developing countries had risen 35 times over the past quarter of a century to \$176

billion, while official development assistance had been decreasing.

But too much of the money was still being directed at only a handful of countries.

Some 100 countries were worse off than they were 15 years ago and the increasing disparities both between rich and poor nations and between the haves and have-nots within countries remained a serious threat to stability.

The dramatic increase in world trade and the emergence of powerful new trading blocs has also served to add to the marginalisation of the world's poorest nations.

"The goal for the 21st century has to be the creation of a true global economy, genuinely open to all of the world's peoples," Mr. Annan said.

World Bank official estimates Gulf war cost at \$200 billion

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab Gulf states lost nearly \$200 billion because of huge payments for the Gulf War, which resulted in massive damage in Kuwait, a World Bank expert has said in press comments.

"The Gulf War has cost Arab Gulf states nearly \$200 billion but they have managed to rationalise expenditure, cut budget deficits and repay most of their debts," said Bashir Zuhairi, banking and monetary expert at the bank.

Mr. Zuhairi, interviewed by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) daily Al Itihad, gave no details, but Kuwait and Saudi Arabia alone paid more than \$65 billion to finance a U.S.-led multinational force that drove Iraqi invasion forces out of Kuwait in February 1991.

The invasion also resulted in the destruction of Kuwait's main facilities and the damage of its oil sector, which was rehabilitated after liberation.

Kuwait, one of the wealthiest

countries, was forced to slash its overseas assets of around \$100 billion to \$40 billion to finance the allied offensive and reconstruction after the seven-month Iraqi occupation.

Earlier figures by the Abu Dhabi-based Arab Monetary Fund estimated total damage from the Gulf war at more than \$600 billion. It included Iraq, whose civilian and military sectors sustained heavy damage in the conflict.

Mr. Zuhairi said the Gulf

Cooperation Council (GCC) states, which sit atop 45 per cent of the world's oil, needed to spend \$100 billion in five years on the development of their oilfields and the gas and refining industries.

New shipping companies are also needed for the expanding petrochemical sector in the GCC, which groups Saudi Arabia, the world's top crude producer and exporter, with Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain and the UAE.

Mr. Zuhairi estimated that the GCC and the other members of the 22-states of the Arab League had nearly \$800 billion in investments abroad. They are concentrated in stocks and bonds, bank deposits and real estate.

REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NT\$	FRF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.6345	0.6252	1.4235	121.32	1.3468	1608.83	1.8558	5.5325
DE Mark	0.6118	1.0000	0.3822	0.8709	74.21	0.8237	983.99	1.1231	3.3842
GB Sterling	1.5994	2.6230	1.0000	2.2801	194.85	2.1541	2573.16	2.9362	8.8487
CH Franc	0.7025	1.1474	0.4387	1.0000	85.19	0.9455	1129.40	129.28	3.8536
JP Yen	0.0082	0.1367	0.0149	0.0129	1.0000	1.1097	13.26	151.26	4.5584
CA Dollar	0.7425	1.2189	0.4585	1.0806	1.11	1.0000	1194.65	1.3690	4.1130
IT Lira	0.0006	0.0103	0.0004	0.0004	132.02	0.8366	1.00	11.40	3.4367
NL Guilder	0.5447	0.8900	0.3403	0.7754	66.04	0.7334	876.03	1.00	3.0125
FR Franc	0.1808	0.2954	0.1130	0.2572	21.91	0.2434	33.18	33.1800	1.00

Energy									
Oil	Last	Prev							
Brent	23.60	24.30							
W. Texas	24.10	24.75							
Bony	23.60	24.30							
Dubai	20.94	20.75							
UL Gas	214.00	214.00							

Mid-East Currencies									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY				
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4360	0.1667	0.3782	32.3814				
AE Dirham	0.2724	0.4454	0.1703	0.3849	33.0666				
KV Dinar	3.3102	5.4126	2.0694	4.7176	401.768				
BF Dinar	0.3770	0.3365	1.6537	3.7729	321.958				
CY Pound	2.027	3.3131	1.2688	2.8854	245.916				

Metal Prices									
Metal	Bid	Offer							
Gold (oz's)	344.6	345.1							
Silver (oz's)	4.93	4.95							
Platinum (oz's)	348.75	349.75							
AL (3 Months)	1627	1629							
CU (3 Months)	2187	2192							
Zinc (3 Months)	1172	1174							
Lead (3 Months)	672	673							
NI (3 Months)	7600	7640							

Main Equity Indices									
Bourse	Index	Change	% Chg	High	Low	Pr Chg			
New York	DOW JONES	6813.09	-10.77	-0.16	6873.89	6808.08	6823.86		
New York	S&P 500	786.16	1.99	0.25	791.86	784.17	784.17		
London	FT-SE 100	4275.8	47.4	1.12	4275.8	4242.9	4226.4		
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	18330.01	465.97	2.61	18610.2	17948.9	17864		
Paris	CAC 40	2516.56	13.5	0.54	2521.88	2488.2	2503.06		
Frankfurt	DAX	3035.15	17.83	0.59	3036.46	3019.67	3017.32		

Energy									
Commodity	Last	Delivery							
Coffee (lb's)	144.08	Spot							
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1329	Spot							
Sugar (\$/ton)	303.9	Spot							
Wheat (\$/ton)	129	Spot							
Soy (\$/bush)	22.28	Spot							
Tea (\$/kg)	89.1	Spot							
Barley (\$/bush)	2.21	Spot							
Rice (\$/ton)	470	Spot							

JOD Cross Rates									
Currency	Buy	Sell							
US Dollar	0.708	0.710							
GB Sterling	1.1313	1.137							
DE Mark	0.4326	0.4348							
CH Franc	0.4972	0.4997							
FR Franc	0.1279	0.1285							
JP Yen	0.5828	0.5857							
NL Guilder	0.3852	0.3871							
IT Lira	0.4394	0.4416							

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS

- Te Kanawa solo
- Piece of a corolla
- Truck driver, at times
- Coin
- Source of hemp
- A Guthrie
- "The — Tales" (Chaucer)
- Catch
- Computer messages
- Hold back
- June 6, 1944
- Liverpool fuel
- Title in colonial India
- Baobab, e.g.
- Mimic
- Mineral lump
- Croissant
- European dormouse
- Liquid meas.
- vs. Madison
- hoo
- City on the Missouri
- Dorothy's dog
- Greasy spoons
- Moist
- Face
- At — and — sevens
- Kind of engine
- Tennis shots
- Reverberate
- Andrea —
- In — (bored by routine)
- Trudeau's comic strip
- Only
- Missed the mark
- Gen. Robert —
- "Hopalong Cassidy"
- Thickheaded
- Colored

by Randall J. Hartman

5 Golf word
6 Dwindles
7 Drawn tight
8 Estate
9 Nonprofessional
10 Novel by Voltaire
11 Author of "The Martian Chronicles"
12 Director Kazan
13 — poly
14 Rock group
15 Zhivago's love
16 Sacred
17 Sweet wine
18 Jostle
19 Elton's john
20 DDE's command
21 Mandolin's kin
22 "In — we trust"
23 Friend: Fr.
24 Actress Angela
25 Harpo
26 Univ. mil. gp.
27 Stole
28 Ranked
29 Checked into

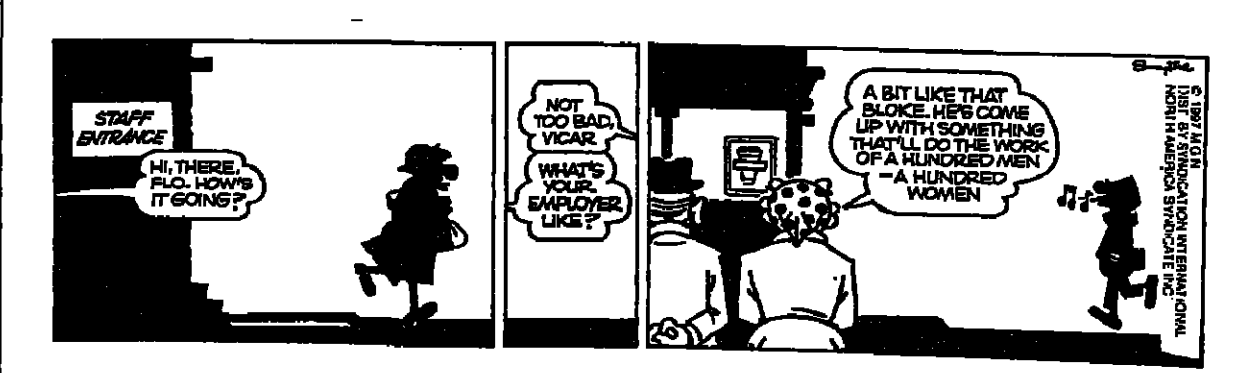
50 Recalcitrant
51 Evening affair
52 Remained
53 Touchdown, e.g.
54 Ranked
55 Paid notices
56 Mary's pet

58 Cookie
59 Orchestra member
60 Change for a fin
61 Netherlands commune

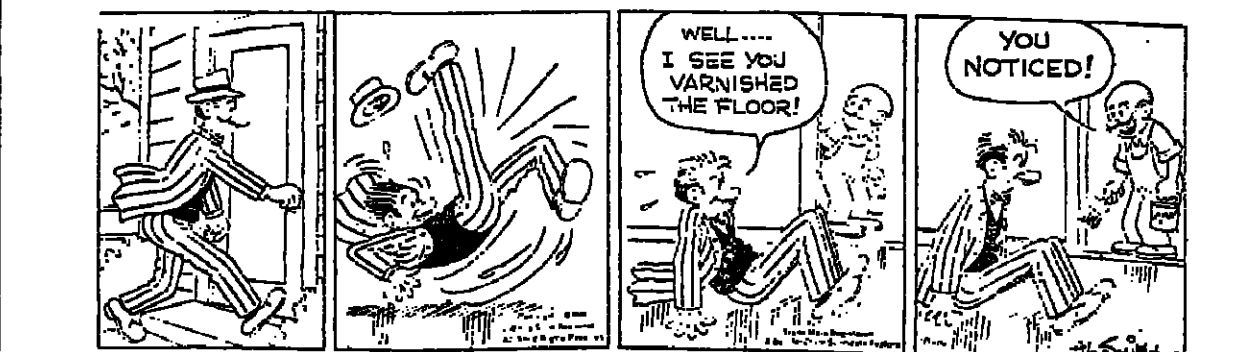
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n' Jeff



...the world's net imports of farm products although they have enough arable land and less than five per cent of the global population, official figures have showed.

The 22-member Arab League imported an average \$18 billion worth of farm products annually over the past five years, 60 per cent of the world's net imports of \$30 billion, the Arab Monetary Fund (AMF) said.

In contrast, their farm exports remained as low as \$5.5 billion per year, a

fraction of the worldwide food exports of \$525 billion.

The large gap between their farm imports and exports has cost Arab countries more than \$180 billion over the past 15 years.

Between 1990 and 1995, the cumulative Arab food deficit reached a staggering \$50 billion, the Abu Dhabi-based fund said in a study, quoting the official Arab Corporation for Agricultural Development.

The gap covered all farm products, with cereals accounting for nearly half despite efforts to increase

the area of such crops.

The report showed Saudi Arabia and its partners in the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) remained the biggest food importers in the Arab World, accounting for nearly a half of the total farm purchases.

Experts said the GCC, which also groups Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), remained heavily reliant on imported agricultural products because of their arid desert land.

But the six members, which control nearly 45 per cent of the world's proven

oil reserves, have pumped billions of dollars into agricultural projects and subsidies to encourage farmers.

Although they have reported a sharp expansion in their cultivated areas, production still far lags behind population growth.

The GCC nations have also been reluctant to invest in the farming sector in such fertile countries as Sudan, Iraq and Lebanon because of wars.

Lack of investment has remained one of the main reasons for the poor performance of

Worldwide spending on personal computers slowed in 1996

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The worldwide personal computer market slowed significantly in 1996 with the sharpest drop registered in the fourth quarter because of falling sales in Germany and problems at Apple Computers, two think tanks have said here.

A report by International Data Corp. (IDC) said deliveries of personal computers grew by only 11 per cent, or 20.4 million units, in the last three months of 1996 compared to the last quarter of 1995.

The growth in the global market over the year

slowed to 16 per cent, or 68.4 million units, from 25 per cent in 1995, IDC said.

Between 1991 and 1995, the market soared by 21 per cent annually.

Excluding Apple sales, however, market growth in 1996 was 20 per cent.

Apple deliveries fell by 22 per cent to 3.6 million units, IDC said. The Apple Computer model Macintosh lost one-third of its market share in the last quarter, falling to 4.5 per cent from 7.1 per cent in 1995.

A competing research institute, Dataquest, said

UAE in new drive to boost nationals in Asian-dominated bank sector

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has launched a new drive to boost the number of nationals working in the Asian-dominated banking sector over the next five years.

Quoted by local newspapers, minister of state for financial and industrial affairs, Ahmad Al Tayar, said nationals made up less than 10 per cent of the banking workforce despite previous attempts to raise their number.

"We are now targeting an increase of the national labour in the banking sector to between 50 and 60 per cent over the next five years," he said.

But bankers doubt such a level would be reached as many locals are reluctant to take up jobs in banks, preferring the public service with its numerous financial incentives and end-of-service benefits.

They said previous campaigns by the central bank had failed to produce results

despite the banks' willingness to recruit more locals.

"The central bank knows it is not our fault. We are ready to take more nationals and offer them attractive incentives," a UAE bank manager said.

"But most of them stay in the job only for a few months because they either want senior positions, start their own business or join a government job," he added.

More than 80 per cent of the nearly 12,400 employees in the UAE's commercial banks are from India, Pakistan and other Asian countries.

They are preferred because they have experience and accept relatively low salaries.

In previous circulars, the central bank's 19 national banks and 28 foreign banks must boost their national workforce to at least 15 per cent. But only a handful of them have complied and some units still have virtually no national employees.

Mr. Tayar was speaking at a meeting of a ministerial committee created in 1996 to oversee the "nationalisation" of bank jobs. It comprises the ministers of finance, labour and social affairs, and economy and commerce besides the central bank governor and other officials.

Mr. Tayar said the committee had drawn up a nationalisation plan following a series of meetings with bank managers.

"The committee had made field visits to all banks operating in the country. It discussed ways to remove obstacles for increasing the number of national employees and listened to ideas from the banks," the minister said.

He gave no details of the five-year plan but bankers said it covered intensive training and more incentives for national employees.

Training would be provided by the banks and the Sharjah-based Emirates Institute for Financial and Banking Studies, the only centre in the UAE to specialise in the field. But authorities are considering introducing financial studies to the Emirates University and other institutes.

"Authorities should think that the banks also need incentives so they will be encouraged to employ more nationals. I think with an integrated plan, they can make progress but this needs time," a local banker said.

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

International firms studying possibility of rescuing Hammamat Ma'in

SEVEN INTERNATIONAL firms are currently studying the possibility of investing at Hammamat Ma'in spa the touristic project owned by the Jordan Tourism and Spa Complex, Mohammad Batayneh, general manager of the Jordan Investment Corporation, has said.

The seven companies represent Arab and foreign investors studying the terms and technical framework of their investments.

The JIC has previously announced its intention to give away the project, which has been facing difficulties for the past few years, to the private sector to run it in accordance with specific terms and on bases laid down in cooperation with experts from the World Bank.

Mr. Batayneh expects more contacts in the near future from about 50 international firms which have expressed interest in this important project. He said despite generating operational profit that has reached JD500,000 last year, the company's final result was not viable as the depreciation costs during 1996 stood at JD800,000. On top of this, the company suffers from accumulated losses of the previous years, Mr. Batayneh indicated.

The JIC chief said: "It has not been possible to restructure Hammamat Ma'in in the ways we wanted and considered to be convincing and, as such, we resorted to offer the project for the investment and management of companies specialised in the tourism sector." Mr. Batayneh indicated that the JIC intends to lease the whole of Hammamat Ma'in to any party that would meet the requirements and within a concession agreement to engage an international management and operate the complex against annual fees. He added that the winning party would have to bear the responsibility of developing and renovating the project.

According to Mr. Batayneh, the complex would require about JD3 million in renovation costs. Such a sum cannot be taken by the company in its current situation, he added noting that no real maintenance or modernisation has been done to the project for the past nine years.

Mr. Batayneh believes that engaging an international investor and management is the best and most viable to solve the trouble of the Jordan Tourism and Spa Complex (Al Dastour).

February shopping festival opens in Lebanon

BEIRUT (R) — Fifty per cent discount signs were hung across Lebanon on Saturday signalling the start of a one-month shopping festival aimed at boosting the country's image as a Middle East tourist centre.

Hotels, airlines, restaurants and shops announced a wide range of discounts to run throughout February after the government began a promotional campaign two months ago.

"The idea is to attract as many tourists as possible and to reveal the civilised face of Lebanon and to highlight the return of stability to the country," Economy Minister Yassin Jaber was quoted as saying in Lebanon's national news agency.

Tourism flourished in Lebanon before the 1975-1990 civil war, contributing 20 per cent of the country's earnings.

The February "shopping month" in Lebanon is mainly

expected to attract Gulf Arabs who flocked to Lebanon in pre-war days to enjoy its cool mountains and hot nightlife.

Lebanon's national air carrier Middle East Airlines reduced by up to 50 per cent fares on most of its incoming flights.

Director of sales at the Marriott Hotel, Marinette Dorkhom, said the festival was an encouraging initiative.

The five-star hotel, which opened last May, is offering the 50 per cent discount on its \$260, \$240 and \$380 rooms. The country's other major hotels are also cutting rates by half.

"Most people are coming from the Gulf. Some Europeans who had booked for meetings in other months rescheduled for February," she said.

Discounts offered by shops in Beirut's thoroughfares like Hamra, Mar Elias, Fum Al Shoubbak and Zalka range between 30 per cent and 50 per cent.

PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	COMPANY'S NAME	P/E	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANG.
261.000	205.000	ARAB BANK	14.1	1.36	7	340	87305	255.50	257.00
1.210	.880	HID. EAST INV. BK.	74.9	0.00	4	3,000	36480	1.14	1.14
5.250	4.250	THE HOUSING BK.	12.5	2.94	7	1874	8787	4.67	4.69
2.950	2.400	JOR. INVEST. BANK	12.9	0.00	6	1915	3830	2.92	2.71
1.090	.880	JOR. GULF BANK	5.7	7.29	15	36786	37233	.96	.96
4.180	3.480	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	17.9	0.00	5	1650	6172	3.75	3.73
3.800	3.000	JOR. INV. FUND BANK	18.8	0.00	3	600	2063	3.50	3.47
1.450	1.000	PHILADEL. INV. BK.	9	0.00	3	2000	2505	1.30	1.24

BANK SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 195.52 CHNG: +0.32 51 78755 184675

INDEX	195.52	CHNG	+0.32	51	78755	184675
-------	--------	------	-------	----	-------	--------

INDEX	111.93	CHNG	+0.11	54	94955	397361
-------	--------	------	-------	----	-------	--------

INDEX	115.42	CHNG	+0.26	191	15,884	254554
-------	--------	------	-------	-----	--------	--------

INDEX	153.28	CHNG	+0.08	296	376594	836590
-------	--------	------	-------	-----	--------	--------

INDEX	153.28	CHNG	+0.08	296	376594	836590
-------	--------	------	-------	-----	--------	--------

INDEX	153.28	CHNG	+0.08	296	376594	836590
-------	--------	------	-------	-----	--------	--------

INDEX	153.28	CHNG	+0.08	296	376594	836590
-------	--------	------	-------	-----	--------	--------

INDEX	153.28	CHNG	+0.08	296	376594	836590
-------	--------	------	-------	-----	--------	--------

INDEX	153.28	CHNG	+0.08	296	376594	836590
-------	--------	------	-------	-----	--------	--------

INDEX	153.28	CHNG	+0.08	296	376594	836590
-------	--------	------	-------	-----	--------	--------

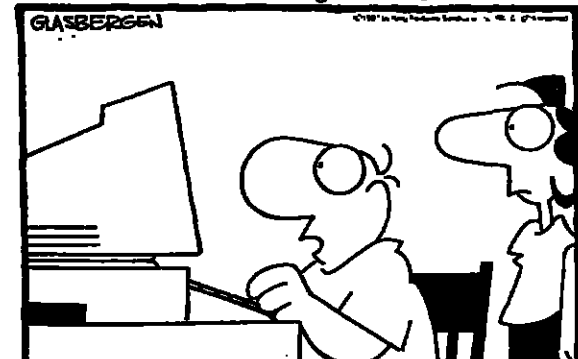
INDEX	153.28	CHNG	+0.08	296	376594	836590
-------	--------	------	-------	-----	--------	--------

INDEX	153.28	CHNG	+0.08	296	376594	836590
-------	--------	------	-------	-----	--------	--------

INDEX	153.28	CHNG	+0.08	296	376594	836590
-------	--------	------	-------	-----	--------	--------

INDEX	153.28	CHNG	+0.08	296	376594	836590
-------	--------	------	-------	-----	--------	--------

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



"My doctor says I should spend more time outdoors. I'll need to buy a laptop."

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles. One letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

IMCAG

THONC

YORPTS

HARTOU

Answer: _____ TO _____ (Answers Monday)

Yesterday's Jumbles: BOUGH TWILL ELEVEN SICKEN Answer: When he was late for dinner she was STEWING

JORDAN MARKETPLACE *** JORDAN MARKETPLACE *** JORDAN MARKETPLACE

DAJANI JEWELLERS World gems, hand made in Jordan in 18 & 21 k. gold. A truly unique shop. Outstanding designs. Amra Hotel Shops 6th Circle, Amman Also in Brazil

FOR RENT

- 3 bedrooms apartment in Shmeisani, second floor, 220 sq.m.

- 3 bedrooms in Al Rabia area, third floor, 190 sq.m.

Abdoun Real Estate
Tel: 810605 - 810609
Fax: 810520

STUDIO HAIG

Professional Quality in 1 Hour Service

Develop your colour film at our shop and get:

• JUMBO photo size 30% larger

• Free enlargement 20 x 30 cm

Shmeisani - Opp. Grindlays Bank. Phone: 820442
Swedish tel: 823891

CLEANING SERVICES HOME SERVICES PUBLIC PLACES

MAINTENANCE SERVICES HEATING SYSTEMS PLUMBING

FOR RENT: DELUXE VILLAS AND FLATS FURNISHED OR UNFURNISHED

BYE-BELLO-S
TEL: 820883-820883

SECURITY HOSPITALITY GASTRONOMY

New Low Season Rates. Fax 863051

HOTEL FORTUNA
863944
Swedish

FOR RENT

DELUXE VILLAS AND APARTMENTS FURNISHED OR UNFURNISHED

JAMAL REAL ESTATE

TEL: 699369
FAX: 704414

Japanese Restaurant

Teppanyaki Sashimi Sushi

For Res. 812997 - 814118
Mecca St. Daoud Center

Your Address In Amman

CRYSTAL

Quality Furnished Suites One & Two Bedrooms

Reasonable Rates For Short Or Long Stay

5th Circle
Tel. 692672 Fax 674551

CROWN HOTEL

INDOOR HEATED SWIMMING POOL

SAUNA, JACUZZI & MASSAGE

FITNESS ROOM

TENNIS & SQUASH COURTS

TEL: 758180
Radio & TV Station Rd.

SANABEL REAL ESTATE

FOR RENT

Deluxe Villas & Apartments in Amman

For details please call
Tel: 864230
Fax: 864231

TO ADVERTISE IN THIS SECTION CALL 667171/6 - 670141/4 Ext. 223

PIZZA GRANDE

The Real Italian Taste

Gourmet PIZZA

We use the very best ingredients

Try the ONLY STUFFED PIZZA in Jordan (Chicago Style)

PAN PIZZA (Thin or Thick Crust)

ITALIAN SANDWICHES

For Res. 812997 - 814118
Mecca St. Daoud Center

Graf, Hingis advance to 'dream' final

TOKYO (R) — World No.1 Steffi Graf and her teenage challenger Martina Hingis took different paths but won their semifinal matches on Saturday in the Pan Pacific indoor women's open to set up a dream showdown between them.

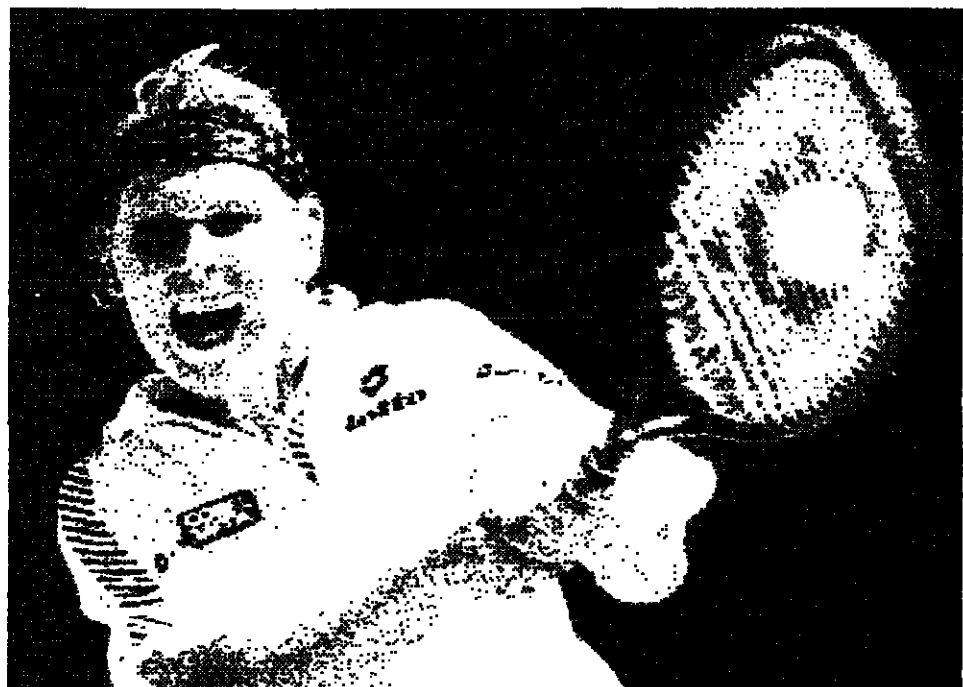
In what was likely to be a highlight of the 1997 tennis year, Hingis, 16, and Graf, 26, slug it out on carpet-like artificial turf on Sunday to determine who is the new "queen" of the women's game.

Switzerland's Hingis reached the final first with a hard-fought 6-1 5-7 6-2 victory over Germany's Anke Huber, while Graf had an easier time beating Brenda Schultz-McCarthy of the Netherlands 6-1 7-5.

Graf, throwing off the effects of a horror week before her arrival in Japan eight days ago, had the look of a champion determined not to lose her crown in beating the Dutch player.

Top seed Graf, who last week was knocked out of the Australian Open in the fourth round and then saw her father convicted of tax evasion, has not needed more than an hour in each of her three matches to reach the final.

Hingis, the second seed in both world rankings and this tournament behind



Anke Huber

Graf, had an equally easy time until she lost her concentration in the second set against Huber.

The match records of Hingis and Graf sum up the decade that separate them in age.

In Friday's quarterfinal, Hingis won her 100th professional matches while Graf goes into Sunday showdown seeking her 103rd major title.

But momentum is on the

side of Hingis.

A losing semifinalist in the tournament here last year, Hingis bids on Sunday for her third singles title only five weeks into this year's Women's Tennis Association Tour.

She won the Sydney International three weeks ago and last week became the youngest winner of an open title when she took the Australian Open.

On Friday, Graf said age

was the main difference between her and Hingis, both of them hard-hitting baseline players who wear their opponents down.

"Obviously 10 years makes a big difference. You're young, there's more excitement, you've got nothing to lose," Graf had said.

"Ten years later, you're a different person. You're not as naive or as open-minded as you were 10 years ago."

Pacers silence Olajuwon and trounce Rockets

INDIANAPOLIS (R) — Reggie Miller scored 17 of his 33 points in the first quarter as the Indiana Pacers contained Hakeem Olajuwon and thumped the undermanned Houston Rockets, 100-74 on Friday.

Dale Davis added 17 points for the Pacers.

"We needed this victory and we've needed it all year," said Miller, who was 12-for-20 from the field. "It was a very big team effort. The main focus was to turn around the season and win tonight. We must play like this all the time."

Olajuwon, who had 24 field for 48 points in Thursday's 113-109 loss to Denver, was held scoreless for the game's first 18:54 and finished with only six points and three rebounds in 31 minutes.

Sam Mack led Houston with 15 points.

In Boston, Rick Fox tied a career-high with 33 points, including a go-ahead three-pointer with 56 seconds left, as the Boston Celtics overcame a 23-point deficit to defeat the Portland Trail Blazers, 111-105.

Todd Day and David Wesley each added 20 points for the Celtics, who snapped a seven-game losing streak.

Gary Trent had 24 points and Clifford Robinson 21 for the Trail Blazers, who lost their third

straight game.

In Charlotte, Glen Rice continued his torrid scoring, exploding for 10 of his 43 points in a game-breaking 16-3 run, as the Charlotte Hornets defeated the Milwaukee Bucks, 102-95.

Anthony Mason finished with 13 points, 11 rebounds and nine assists for the Hornets, who won for the eighth time in their last 11 games.

Ray Allen scored 22 points and Vin Baker and Glenn Robinson added 18 apiece for Milwaukee.

At Golden State, Scottie Pippen scored 23 of his 32 points in the first half as the Chicago Bulls built a 37-point lead and cruised to a 115-92 victory over the Golden State Warriors.

Pippen had 10 points in the first quarter, helping Chicago build a 35-8 lead over the Warriors.

Michael Jordan and Toni Kukoc each had 18 points for Chicago.

In Philadelphia, Penny Hardaway scored 27 points as the Orlando Magic topped the struggling Philadelphia 76ers, 109-99, for their sixth win in seven games.

Horace Grant added 16 points and Tony Seikaly had 13 for Orlando. Hardaway has scored 109 points over the last four games for the Magic, who have won nine of their last 11 games.

Rookie Allan Iverson scored 26 points.

In San Antonio, Chris Carr's jumper with less than a second left lifted the Minnesota Timberwolves to a 97-95 victory over the San Antonio Spurs.

San Antonio's Sean Elliott hit a three-pointer from the right side to tie the game, 95-95, with 36 seconds left, setting the stage for Carr's heroics.

"We just keep on winning," Carr said. "We just have to go out there and get a little more respect."

Kevin Garnett scored 30 points and Tom Gugliotta added 22 for Minnesota.

In Seattle, Gary Payton scored 19 points and Detlef Schrempf added five of his 18 in the final 70 seconds as the Seattle SuperSonics beat the Washington Bullets, 97-95.

Shawn Kemp had 13 points and 10 rebounds and Payton handed out seven assists for Seattle, which improved to 18-5 at home and won for the 16th time in 20 games.

Chris Webber scored 20 points and pulled down 10 rebounds for Washington, which has not won at Seattle in 17 years.

In Vancouver, Steve Smith scored 10 of his 24 points in the fourth quarter to lead five starters in double figures as the Atlanta Hawks beat the Vancouver Grizzlies 87-76 victory.

Mookie Blaylock had 21 points and Christian Laettner had 15.

Ski chief reassures minor nations

SESTRIERE, Italy (R) — The also-rans and no-hopers of Alpine skiing can rest easy.

Their dreams of springing an upset — or at least a top 20 finish — in major events such as the world championships or winter Olympics remain alive.

Gianfranco Kasper, the general secretary of the International Ski Federation (FIS), said on Friday that attempts by the sport's old powers — notably Austria — to get more skiers into the events would not succeed.

"I don't think the format will be changed," The Swiss said in an interview before skiers from 58 nations gather for the two-week long 1997 world championships which start here on Sunday.

Under current FIS rules, each nation competing at major events such as world championships or Olympics is entitled to only four starters in each of the five events. The defending world champion also qualifies automatically.

That ruling effectively puts the mighty Austrians on a numerical level with Belgium or Lebanon — providing they meet the minimum requirements by being world ranked.

Austria, which has at least nine top class world cup athletes in each of the disciplines, wants to change the system to ensure that all those skiers ranked in the top 20 or 30 in the world get a chance to race the big events.

"We have been having talks with the FIS about this matter for quite some time now and slowly but surely we appear to be coming to



Italian soldiers make finishing touches near the finish area of the slalom piste of the Alpine Skiing World Championships. The two-week long championships get underway in the Italian resort with athletes from some 58 nations (Reuters photo)

an agreement," Austrian Ski Federation race director Hans Pum told Reuters in Kitzbuehel last week.

Austrians have long put all their energies into qualification for their team and are often accused of looking tired in the races themselves. Automatic selection by world ranking would take away the pressure.

"Of course there are some obvious problems where international interest is concerned if nine out of 40 starters are austrians," said Pum.

On the other hand it is outrageous to have a higher standard at a world cup race than at a big event.

Kasper disagreed entirely. "We will always have to have a restriction on the numbers," he said.

He said the subject came up every time major nations had to select their teams and Alpine skiing already allowed more competitors per nation in Olympics than any other sport.

Asked if change would come, he replied: "No". "It has been requested at FIS congress several times that the top 15 be automatically qualified. Politically it never goes through. Even the big nations are not in favour."

None want to give their rivals an advantage.

All the small nations would be opposed because under the existing system they have a chance of getting in the top 20 and thereby attracting sponsorship and investment.

Players bet against themselves in Spanish pools win

MADRID (R) — Sporting Gijon players have walked into a storm of criticism after winning nine and a half million Pesetas (\$68,350) by betting that they would lose or draw last Sunday's Derby game with Oviedo. The match ended 0-0.

The 27 players are to give up doing the pools, but are unlikely to face disciplinary action from club authorities or the Spanish Soccer Federation. The game was played after 13 of the other 14 fixtures on the pools coupon had finished.

"The bet was decided by dice," said sporting forward Francisco Luna.

The players have also pointed out that they lost 500,000 Pesetas (\$3,600) each in bonuses by not beating Oviedo.

But they would have started the game knowing that they already stood a good chance of winning a sizeable sum, though not how much it was likely to be.

In the state-owned soccer pools, known as the "Quiniela", participants must guess whether the 11 First Division games and four Second Division fixtures chosen at random will finish in a home win, draw or away win.

The Spanish Federation has no rules preventing players from doing the pools.

Fernando Garrido, head of press at the Federation, on Friday described the episode as "a curiosity, an anecdote."

He said: "We certainly don't imagine that this was done deliberately. The Federation is not considering changing its rules."

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Jordan hints at NBA return

OAKLAND (AFP) — Michael Jordan anticipates he will return to the National Basketball Association next season, but the legend who makes \$30 million for this season has made no guarantees. "At the moment, I look forward to playing next year," Jordan said. "I don't see anything that says I won't or I will change my mind." Of course, there was little warning when Jordan quit the Chicago Bulls on the eve of the first practice of the 1993-1994 season. But now Jordan is planning to win a fifth NBA crown in seven years and seek another in 1998. "Nobody can put a time frame, or a time limit, on something you love," Jordan said. "Right now I love the game. I hope to fulfill all those expectations of winning a championship and go right into next year." Jordan is on pace for a record ninth NBA scoring crown while the Bulls are 39-5 and on pace to surpass their record 72-10 mark of last season.

Olympic champion in injury scare

LAAX, Switzerland (AFP) — Warwara Zelenskaja of Russia won only her second World Cup race in a women's downhill here on Saturday as Olympic champion Katja Seizinger escaped unhurt after a dramatic fall. Zelenskaja timed 1min 24.98sec for the 2,603 metre course to beat Switzerland's Heidi Zurbiggen and Austria's Renate Goetschl, who finished nine hundredths of a second behind in a tie for second place. Zelenskaja, fourth in last Saturday's downhill at Cortina D'Ampezo in Italy, scored her maiden win at Narvik, Norway, in 1996.

Perec to miss indoor championships

PARIS (R) — France's double Olympic sprint champion Marie-Jose Perec will not compete at the World Indoor Championships in Paris from March 7-9. "Marie-Jose will not do indoors this season. That's a final decision," Perec's manager Jukka Harkonen said. Harkonen told the French sports daily L'Equipe, the Olympic 200 and 400 metres champion had not started training until the middle of this month and was concentrating on the summer season.

Ivanisevic opponent pulls out

ZAGREB (R) — German Alex Radulescu was forced to quit his Croatian indoor quarter-final against titleholder Goran Ivanisevic on Friday because of a back injury. World No. 2 Ivanisevic had swept through the first set without dropping a game and the score stood at 1-1 in the second when Radulescu retired. Ivanisevic will meet fifth-seeded Spaniard Javier Sanchez, a 6-0 7-6 winner over Argentine Gaston Etis, in the semifinals. Second seed Thomas Enqvist of Sweden reached the last four by beating Moroccan Hicham Arazi 6-2 6-3. He will play Briton Greg Rusedski of Britain, a 7-5 6-3 winner over Martin Damm of the Czech Republic.

Unbridled's Song retired

HALLANDALE, Florida (R) — Unbridled's Song, the 1996 Florida Derby winner who went down to defeat as the favourite in the Kentucky Derby, suffered a broken cannon bone in his right front leg Friday and was retired. Trainer Nick Zito announced that the four-year-old colt broke his leg during a morning gallop at Gulfstream Park in Florida under regular rider Mike Smith. "He seemed slightly off this week, but X-rays at first did not disclose anything," Zito said.

GOVERN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM HIRSH

ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

AKS 072 CAQJ92 AKJ54

The bidding has proceeded:

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST

10 Pass 12 Pass

What do you bid now?

A - The two obvious choices are one no trump and two clubs. Since the two obvious choices are one no trump and two clubs, you have enough for game. The way to bring these two choices to a head is to jump to four spades — three spades would be invitational and might get passed.

Q.2 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

AKJ73 OAS CAQJ92 AKS

The bidding has proceeded:

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST

10 Pass 10 Pass

What do you bid now?

A - In support of spades your hand is worth 20 points. Even if partner has a dead-minimum of six, you have enough for game. The way to bring these two choices to a head is to jump to four spades — three spades would be invitational and might get passed.

Q.3 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

AKJ3 CAQJ10782 09 AKS

Your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with one club. What do you bid now?

A - Had your opponent not opened the bidding, you would have preempted with three hearts. The fact that East did initiate the auction should make no difference. Jump to three hearts, to crowd the bidding.

Q.4 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

AKS 072 CAQJ92 AKJ54

The bidding has proceeded:

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST

10 Pass 12 Pass

What do you bid now?

A - We know there is a temptation to bid three no trump and hope that partner has a spade stopper. However, we feel that you can better describe your minimum opening bid by rebidding four diamonds. Of course, a pass is out of the question as is more forward-going than a one-no-trump rebid.

Q.5 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

AKS 072 CAQJ92 AKJ54

The bidding has proceeded:

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST

10 Pass 12 Pass

What do you bid now?

A - An awkward hand. You would like to raise clubs, perhaps with a jump, but that might bypass the only makeable contract of three no trump. Since three spades would greatly overstate the quality of your suit and is not forcing in the modern style, you will have to improvise with a rebid of two hearts.

Q.6 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

AKJ3 CAQJ10782 09 AKS

The bidding has proceeded:

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST

10 Pass 12 Pass

What do you bid now?

A - There is nothing you can do with any degree of safety, especially since a bid of two spades would be forcing. Negative doubling might choose that action, but it is rather risky with a singleton in partner's suit. Pass.

Q.7 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

AKS 072 CAQJ92 AKJ54

The bidding has proceeded:

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST

10 Pass 12 Pass

What do you bid now?

A - We know there is a temptation to bid three no trump and hope that partner has a spade stopper. However, we feel that you can better describe your minimum opening bid by rebidding four diamonds. Of course, a pass is out of the question as is more forward-going than a one-no-trump rebid.

Arab Centre For Heart and Special Surgery

المرکز العربي للقلب والجراحة الخاصة

ان رقم الهاتف الجديد

للتطويع وخدمات الاسعاف الفوري

في المركز العربي للقلب والجراحة الخاصة

قد اصبح ٨٦٥٨٠١

كذلك يمكن الاتصال بنا على هاتف رقم ٨٦٥١٩٩

يحول الى ٢٠ خط ففزي الى ارقام مختلفة

The New Telephone No. for the Emergency and Ambulance Services at the Arab Centre For Heart and Special Surgery

is now 865801

you can also call us at 865199 which will be transferred to thirty automatic different lines

ARABIC FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

The Language Centre at the University of Jordan announces that the Intensive Course in Modern Standard Arabic for Speakers of Other Languages will commence on February 1, 1997 and will last for 16 weeks.

Those interested please call at the Language Centre for registration or further information. The deadline for registration is Wednesday, February 5.

<p>CINEMA TEL:634144</p> <p>PHILADELPHIA "1"</p> <p>Eddie Murphy & Angela Bassett.... in VAMPIRE IN BROOKLYN</p> <p>Shows: 12:30, 3:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30</p>	<p>CINEMA TEL:634144</p> <p>PHILADELPHIA "2"</p> <p>Michael Douglas & Annette Benning... in THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT</p> <p>Shows: 12:30, 3:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30</p>	<p>CINEMA TEL:699238</p> <p>PLAZA</p> <p>Sylvester Stallone...in JUDGE DREDD</p> <p>Shows: 12:00, 2:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30</p>	<p>CINEMA TEL:677420</p> <p>CONCORD</p> <p>CONCORD "1"</p> <p>Robert De Niro....in THE FAN</p> <p>Shows: 12:15, 2:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30</p> <p>CONCORD "2"</p> <p>Coming Soon... "Custom made Citizen"</p> <p>The satirical play starring Mousa Hijazin</p>	<p>Nabil & Hisham's Theatre TEL: 625155</p> <p>The theatre opens on the Ramadan Holiday with the new play entitled Aman.. Ya Ho</p>
--	--	--	--	---

Amman, Jordan (R) — The Jordan national basketball team met the Lebanese national team in a friendly match on Saturday night at the Amman Sports Hall. The Jordanians won the match 78-72. The Jordanian team was led by Michael Jordan, who scored 26 points. The Lebanese team was led by Hisham Al-Hajj, who scored 21 points. The match was part of a series of friendly games between the two teams. The Jordanian team is currently ranked 18th in the world, while the Lebanese team is ranked 21st. The match was a close one, with the Jordanians leading 45-40 at halftime. In the second half, the Jordanians pulled away, scoring 33 points to the Lebanese team's 32. Michael Jordan was the star of the game, scoring 26 points and grabbing 10 rebounds. Hisham Al-Hajj was the star for the Lebanese team, scoring 21 points and grabbing 8 rebounds. The match was a good one for both teams, as they both got a chance to play in front of a large crowd. The Jordanian team will be looking to improve their ranking in the world, while the Lebanese team will be looking to improve their ranking in the Middle East. The match was a good one for both teams, as they both got a chance to play in front of a large crowd.

Imperial Call has t

Amman, Jordan (R) — The Imperial Call has been a success for the Jordanian government. The call was made by the Jordanian government to the people of Jordan, asking them to support the government in its efforts to improve the country. The call was a success, as the people of Jordan have shown their support for the government. The call was a success, as the people of Jordan have shown their support for the government.

Get c

Amman, Jordan (R) — The Jordanian government has announced that it will be providing free medical care to the people of Jordan. The government has announced that it will be providing free medical care to the people of Jordan. The government has announced that it will be providing free medical care to the people of Jordan.

Amman, Jordan (R) — The Jordanian government has announced that it will be providing free medical care to the people of Jordan. The government has announced that it will be providing free medical care to the people of Jordan. The government has announced that it will be providing free medical care to the people of Jordan.

Amman, Jordan (R) — The Jordanian government has announced that it will be providing free medical care to the people of Jordan. The government has announced that it will be providing free medical care to the people of Jordan. The government has announced that it will be providing free medical care to the people of Jordan.

Amman, Jordan (R) — The Jordanian government has announced that it will be providing free medical care to the people of Jordan. The government has announced that it will be providing free medical care to the people of Jordan. The government has announced that it will be providing free medical care to the people of Jordan.

juwon kets

In San Antonio, Chris Carr's jumper with less than a second left tied the Minnesota Timberwolves at a 92-95 victory over the San Antonio Spurs.

San Antonio's Sean Elliott hit a three-pointer from the right side to give the game, 95-98, with 36 seconds left, setting the stage for Carr's heroics.

"We just keep on winning," Carr said. "We just have to go out there and get a little more respect."

Kevin Garnett scored 30 points and Tom Gugliotta added 22 for Minnesota.

In Seattle, Gary Payton scored 10 points and Detlef Schrempf added five of his 18 in the final 10 seconds as the Seattle SuperSonics defeated the Washington Bullets, 92-85.

Shawn Kemp had 13 points and 10 rebounds and Payton handed out seven assists for Seattle, which improved to 18-5 at home and won for the 10th time in 20 games.

Chris Webber scored 20 points and pulled down 10 rebounds for Washington, which has not won at Seattle in 17 years.

In Vancouver, Steve Smith scored 10 of his 24 points in the fourth quarter to lead five starters in double figures as the Atlanta Hawks beat the Vancouver Grizzlies 87-76.

Mookie Blaylock had 21 points and Christian Laettner had 15.

TS IN BRIEF

Michael Jordan announces he will leave Bulls

Michael Jordan announced he will leave the Chicago Bulls after the 1997-98 season. "I don't see anything that will change my mind," he said. "I want to win a championship and I want to win it with the Bulls." Jordan said he will leave the Bulls after the 1997-98 season. "I don't see anything that will change my mind," he said. "I want to win a championship and I want to win it with the Bulls." Jordan said he will leave the Bulls after the 1997-98 season.

Jordan's national soccer team meets Lebanese counterpart today

By Mun'em Fakhoury in Beirut and Aileen Bannayan in Amman

THE KINGDOM'S national soccer team play their first official match against their Lebanese counterpart Sunday as both teams prepare for their upcoming World Cup qualifiers which start in April.

The encounter will be a good opportunity for Jordanian head coach Mohammad Awad to test the readiness of his players who have had a three-week training camp in Amman as part of their preparations for the Asian Group 3 qualifiers which start in Manama, Bahrain against the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.

The Lebanese team, meanwhile, will be facing Kuwait and Singapore in Group 7.

Today's encounter is not an easy one for the Kingdom's team as their opponents have four professional players on the team including star striker Vartan Ghazarian, voted Lebanon's top player a few months ago, and Wael Nuzha. The team also includes Papken Malikian, Tro Kehyayan and Jamal Taha.

While the match will be the first friendly for the Jordanian team, Lebanon have already had eight, scoring impressive results by winning three, losing two and drawing in three.

In their latest match they scored a 2-0 win over Estonia. They also beat Oman 2-1, Georgia 4-3 and 3-1. They lost to Bahrain 3-2 and Oman 2-1 and drew 1-1 with New Zealand, 0-0 with Iran and 2-2 with Algeria.

Jordan had last played the Lebanese team in 1993 losing 1-0 in Beirut and winning 4-1 in Irbid.

The Lebanese team will play in Amman Feb. 7 before the Kingdom's team travels to Baghdad for an extensive training camp March 9-28 where they will also play three matches.

Other friendlies scheduled by the

Jordan Soccer Federation include two against Syria, March 16 in Amman and March 23 in Damascus, while the matches against the Omani team will be held in Muscat March 8, and 11.

Thirty-six Asian countries will contest the first round World Cup qualifiers and have been divided into ten groups.

The top team in each of the 10 groups will qualify for the second round where the teams will be divided into two groups.

The first two from each group will then contest the Asian finals.

The first three qualify directly for the 1998 World Cup in France while the winner of a play-off between the fourth team and the Oceania Zone winner will also qualify.

The Kingdom's team includes Ahmad Abu Nasouh, Mu'taz Rishah, Mohammad Abu Daoud, Yousef Ammouri, Amjad Taher, Mohammad Khaz'ali, Isam Mahmoud, Abdullah Abu Zame'h, Faisal Ibrahim, Hussein Shananeh, Abdallah Shiyyab, Ra'fat Ali, Adnan Awad, Raed Momani, Bassam Al Khatib, Aref Hussein, Khaled Yousef, Munir Abu Hantash, Nart Yadaj and Walid Abdul Rahman.

Seven of Al Faisali's players, currently on leave to take part in the Arab Champion Cup in Morocco next month, will not join the national team's match in Beirut. They are Ahmad Khalil, Mohammad Mahadin, Jamal Abu Abed, Subhi Suleiman, Ja'far Hamad, Hasounah Sheikh and Jiryes Tador. Head coach Mohammad Awad said the seven might join the team starting with the matches in Oman.

Al Faisali will join Arab Cup champs Morocco's Olympic Khreibkeh, Arab Clubs champions Egypt's Al Ahli and runner-up Morocco's Al Raja.

FA in fury over UEFA World Cup decision

LONDON (AFP) — A furious row between the English Football Association and UEFA has erupted this weekend after the sport's European ruling body announced it was backing Germany to host the 2006 World Cup.

UEFA also added that it firmly believed there should only be one bid from Europe to host the finals.

The UEFA decision has angered FA officials who seven months ago confirmed that England would be bidding to host the Cup.

FA officials are angry at what they see as an attempt to derail England's bid.

First news that UEFA was officially backing Germany came in a fax from the ruling body to the FA on Friday.

"It made no reference as to when or where this decision had been taken. At this stage there is no evidence that it was ever recorded publicly," said FA spokesman David Davies.

"UEFA has informed us that the committee had also informed its belief that there should only be one candidate from each continental confederation when bids were submitted to stage the tournament."

"The final decision as to who stages the World Cup of 2006 is scheduled to be taken in June of the year 2000 by FIFA, football's world governing body. It is not a decision for UEFA," Davies added.

"We have no alternative to day though but to see the communications from the UEFA executive as evidence of an attempt at a very early stage to prevent England's bid from receiving proper consideration. The attempt will not succeed," he added.

FA chief executive Graham Kelly insisted that

they had no intention of dropping out of the running, especially after the success of Euro 96, which proved that England has the organisation both on and off the field.

"It is the next logical step for us," said Kelly. "Nobody can question any longer our ability to stage the biggest sporting events in the world." He has already won the backing of the current government and Labour have promised to support the FA too if they win the forthcoming general election.

Kelly said the FA would be seeking political support as a matter of urgency over the next few days.

Discussions with UEFA had gone on late into last night, but officials had not been able to make the organisation alter its earlier decision.

Kelly added: "We have been in touch with FIFA. They have confirmed that bidding has not officially been opened yet. We made it plain that we find it completely inexplicable."

Kelly stressed the FA was not going to war with Germany, even though the German Federation president Egidius Braun is a vice-president and acting treasurer on the UEFA executive committee.

"Our quibble is not with the Germans," he insisted. "They have every entitlement to put forward their case and I am sure it will be a strong one. Our astonishment is at UEFA's decision."

He added: "We have been in touch with FIFA and they have confirmed that the bidding process has not even opened yet."

"It is not a dispute between England and Germany. We will both have strong bids to put forward and we would want their bid and our bid to be considered fairly and openly in the democ-

cratic way these things should be considered.

"We don't relish a situation of this sort but we cannot sit back and allow this to happen to English football."

"We have a duty to the whole of the English game to make sure that our case is properly heard. If we were to lose a fair and honest debate we would accept that just as we would accept a defeat on the football field."

The Euro row over who should stage the 2006 World Cup has already spilled over into the political arena as Labour leader Tony Blair and shadow Heritage secretary Jack Cunningham pledged to "redouble" Labour's support for England's bid.

Dr. Cunningham condemned UEFA for trying to hijack European support for Germany. "I am astonished by the deplorable behaviour of UEFA," he said.

"Their attempt to hijack European support for Germany, in connection with bids to host the 2006 World Cup, must be strenuously contested."

"A Labour government will insist on an open process in which bids to host the 2006 World Cup must be judged on merit."

Labour revealed it even plans to set up its own taskforce to back England's bid.

Dr. Cunningham added: "On Thursday evening, Tony Blair and I met the chairman and chief executive of the FA, as well as England coach Glenn Hoddle, to pledge our emphatic support for the FA's bid to host the World Cup in 2006."

"We will redouble our efforts in support of the FA following this news. A Labour government will establish a taskforce to support the FA's bid to bring the World Cup to England in 2006."

Bills quarterback Kelly announces retirement

BUFFALO (R) — Quarterback Jim Kelly, who led the Buffalo Bills to an unprecedented four consecutive Super Bowl appearances in the 1990s and lost each time, announced his retirement on Friday.

"I had to make one of the most difficult decisions of my life," a tearful Kelly said at a news conference at the Ralph Wilson fieldhouse. "I've been playing football for 28 years. Many of my dreams have been fulfilled and my goals achieved."

Various broadcast reports

claim that Kelly has been given a \$1 million buyout to retire.

The 36-year-old Kelly, one of the NFL's most prolific passers, is coming off perhaps the worst season of his career.

He battled injuries and completed 59 percent of his passes for 2,810 yards with 237 touchdowns. He threw 83 touchdown passes in two seasons with the Houston Oilers and the United States football league before joining the Bills in 1986.

Kelly's retirement comes

after the hiring of Dan Henning as new offensive coordinator. Henning has said he will call the plays, which could have clashed with Kelly's ability to direct the no-huddle offense.

In 11 NFL seasons, Kelly completed 60 per cent of his passes for 35,467 yards and 237 touchdowns. He threw 83 touchdown passes in two seasons with the Houston Oilers and the United States football league before joining the Bills in 1986.

"I've been privileged to

play my entire NFL career with the same team and play with some hall of famers," Kelly said. "It's now time to devote more time to my wife and family. It's been a great ride. It's not the end of an era. My life is just beginning."

In the four Super Bowl losses, Kelly often faltered. He threw for 829 yards, but had just two touchdown passes and seven interceptions.

"There's been good times and bad times, but the good times outweigh the bad

times 10 times over," Kelly added.

The Bills finished 10-6 last season and made the playoffs for the eighth time in nine seasons. But they suffered a 30-27 loss to the Jacksonville Jaguars in the AFC wild-card round, their first playoff setback in nine games at rich stadium.

Kelly's final play for Buffalo will go down as a fourth-quarter fumble that led to the winning Jacksonville field goal.

Kelly suffered a concussion on the play.

Imperial Call has tough challenge in Hennessy

DUBLIN (R) — Ireland's Cheltenham Gold Cup hero, Imperial Call, heads a star-studded field for Sunday's grade one Hennessy Gold Cup at Leopardstown.

Imperial Call (5-4 favourite) faces seven rivals, three trained in Britain, including 1993

Cheltenham Gold Cup winner, Jodami, in the three mile (4.8-km) contest.

Jodami, winner of three successive Hennessy Gold Cups starting in 1993, was denied the chance to bid for a four-timer by an 11th hour setback 12 months ago. He is 11-2 in the betting for

Sunday.

The Grey Monk, trained by Gordon Richards, heads the British challenge at 7-2 while Belmont King, also from England, is quoted at 10-1. British-trained horses have won the race eight times in its 10-year history.

Get connected for FREE!

Fastlink is offering all new subscribers free connection fee from now until the end of Ramadan.

So, get connected now!

Ramadan Kareem

For more information, please call us at 863750 or 111 on your cellular.

Don't Let Life Slow You Down.

Fastlink
Jordan Mobile Telephone Services

Authorized Dealers

GSM

CONTECH

MABCO

Now, Fastlink makes getting a cellular phone more affordable than ever!

JD 199

Now and until the end of Ramadan while supplies last Fastlink is offering selected Motorola cellular phones at JD 199.

Don't Let Life Slow You Down.

For more information, please call us at 863750 or 111 on your cellular.

Fastlink
Jordan Mobile Telephone Services

Authorized Dealers

GSM

CONTECH

MABCO

Champion in injury scare

and MVP... Warworn... second World Cup... Saturday... Olympic... championship... after a dramatic... victory... for the 2003... to the... and... finished... a... second place... at... in... in 1996.

Miss indoor championships

... will not compete... from March... this season... That's... decision... Harkonen said... told... the... and... had not started... the... was... in... Republic.

Opponent pulls out

German... was... indoor... because... the... had... the... of... winner... in the... Second... of Sweden... play... of Britain... over... Republic.

It's Song retired

Florida... winner... Kentucky... his... announced... during a... He... but... at... and... said.

Nabil & Hisham's Theatre
TEL 624155

The theatre opens on the Ramadan Holiday with the new play entitled Aman.. Ya Ho

Palestinian prisoner tortured to death by PNA police — groups

NABLUS (AFP) — A Palestinian detainee died on Saturday in the autonomous West Bank town of Nablus after being tortured by Palestinian police, a human rights group said.

The Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment (LAW) said Yusef Ismail Mahmoud Al Baba, 32, died in hospital where he had been taken several days ago.

The group said Baba had been arrested on Jan. 3 by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) security services on suspicion of "collaboration" with Israel, but LAW said Baba's family insisted he was arrested over a dispute with his cousin.

LAW said Baba was tortured while in custody, but they gave no details of what injuries the detainee suffered.

Since the beginning of Palestinian autonomy in 1994, the PNA has been widely criticised by international, Israeli and Palestinian rights groups for widespread use of torture.

An Amnesty International report published last year said more than 10 people had died in the custody of PNA security forces since 1995.

"Torture, detention without charge or trial, complaints ignored or threatened with reprisals, a multiplicity of security services with no accountability — all this has created a climate of fear where gross human rights abuses are becoming

systematic," Amnesty added.

Baba, 32, died in Rafidia Hospital in Nablus about 10 a.m. (8 a.m. GMT) about an hour after he was brought in from the Palestinian central prison in the city, according to hospital workers and LAW.

A nurse at the hospital, speaking on condition of anonymity, told the Associated Press Baba had welts along the right side of his body, and that his right arm was badly bruised and swollen.

She said she asked the man what happened to him, and he said "they beat me very badly."

Members of Baba's family, who refused to give their names Saturday, kicked in doors and windows at the hospital. One woman, apparently Baba's sister, shouted that the Palestinian police were "drunken drug dealers."

Baba, a land dealer, had been in custody on charges that he had carried out an improper land deal, according to a statement from LAW.

His death brings to at least 11 the number of Palestinian detainees killed by security forces since the start of the self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in May 1994.

The organisation, which is also an affiliate member of the Paris-based International Federation for Human Rights, said it had affidavits from hospital workers that Baba was tor-

tured to death.

"We condemn this thing," said Shawqi Issa, director of LAW. "The Palestinian security forces are systematically violating human rights and carrying out torture."

Palestinian police officials confirmed Baba's death Saturday, but would give no other details.

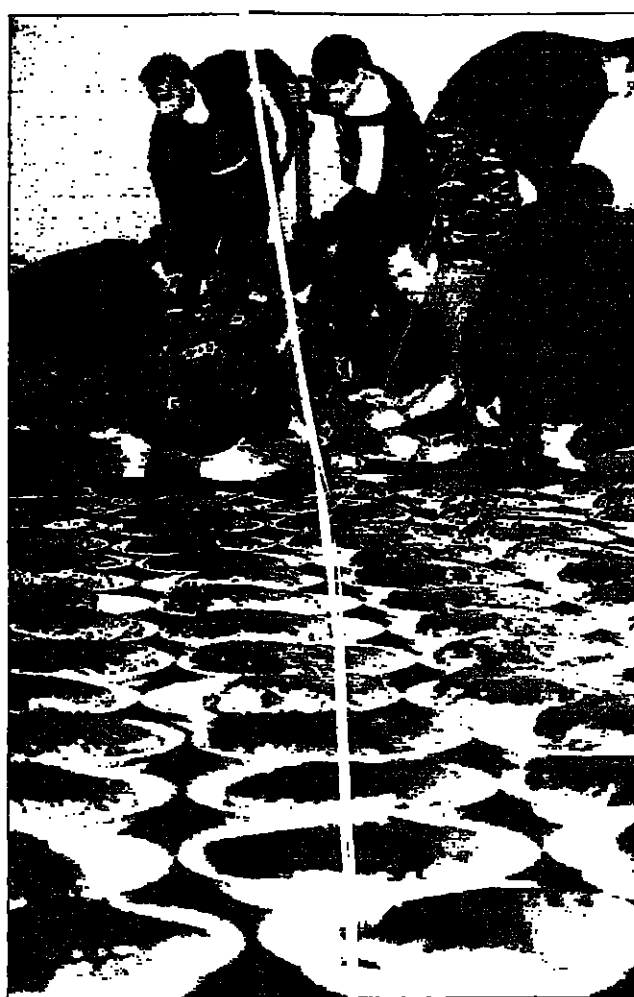
An attorney on behalf of the group tried to see Baba before his death, but was refused access. He has also been kept from seeing the body, Mr. Issa said.

Mr. Issa said a lawyer for the group, Hosni Qalboni, had received power of attorney from the family, and had been refused permission from the Palestinian authorities for a doctor on behalf of the family to be present during the autopsy.

Mr. Issa said his group was alerted to the incident when a LAW field worker and attorney arrived at the prison Saturday in one of several failed attempts to see Baba. They were told that Baba had been taken to the hospital and by the time they arrived there, the man was dead, Mr. Issa said.

He added that Baba had been killed by Palestinian military intelligence interrogators, even though the charges against him were criminal, and not within the jurisdiction of that unit.

"That group is now famous for torturing prisoners to death," Mr. Issa said.



IFTAR TIME IN GAZA: Palestinian police prepare the Ramadan meals on Friday at the Palestinian National Authority headquarters in Gaza City. Palestinian President Yasser Arafat shares iftar with his ministers and securitymen the traditional iftar on Friday (AFP photo)

Iran says it wants good ties with Gulf Arabs

TEHRAN (AFP) — President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani said Saturday Iran was determined to strengthen relations with its Arab neighbours across the Gulf in a meeting here with Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad Bin Jasssem Al Thani.

The president warned that the "enemies seek to prevent development of ties between the region's countries," in a reference to the United States and other Western allies of the Gulf Arab states.

"By making unfounded accusations against Iran, these oppressive powers aim to justify their illegitimate presence in the Persian Gulf and control the region's arms market," he charged in a statement from the presidential office.

Iran is strongly opposed to the presence of Western forces in the Gulf and has urged its Arab neighbours to expel them. "Iran is ready to provide its neighbours, especially Qatar, with technical and industrial assistance," Mr. Rafsanjani told

Sheikh Hamad, who arrived here Saturday for a one-day visit with a message from the Emir of Qatar, Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani.

The Qatari official said his country's policy was to boost relations with Iran. "We attach great importance to Iran's efforts to preserve peace and stability in the region," he was quoted as saying by the Iranian radio.

Earlier, Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati called for closer consultations with the Arab states to "bring our views closer together."

The English-language daily Iran Ne ws, quoting an "expert" on Qatari affairs, said there were obstacles on the way of a \$12-billion project agreed in 1991 to ship drinking water to Qatar from rivers in southern Iran.

The two countries were searching for "more practical and cost-effective ways" to implement it, it said. Iran and Qatar have had good relations since the 1991 Gulf war.

Rights group calls on Iran to free journalist

PARIS (AFP) — The Paris-based International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH) called Friday for the release of an Iranian journalist who, it said, was arrested this week after a German paper published a letter he wrote complaining of being arrested and tortured last year.

A FIDH statement given to AFP said Faraj Sarkouhi had been seized on Wednesday along with his brother Israel Sarkouhi at his home in Tehran by security men who had no legal warrant for his arrest.

"It is not known where they are being held and no official information is available on what has happened to them," the FIDH said.

The arrest of Mr. Sarkouhi, who is editor of the monthly magazine Edine, came after the publication by a German daily appearing on Thursday, of a letter in which Mr. Sarkouhi "described his arrest at Tehran airport on Nov. 3, 1996 as he was preparing to join in family" in Germany.

In the letter Mr. Sarkouhi "described his detention conditions and the tortures inflicted on him for 45 days while Iranian authorities pretended he had left for Germany."

Mr. Sarkouhi also recounted "the conditions in which he was forced to make a televised confession."

The FIDH said "the physical integrity of Faraj Sarkouhi and of his brother, is threatened."

It said the second arrest of the journalist was linked to

"Iranian pressure on the German government in connection with the trial of the killers of Iranian Kurds, now going on in Berlin."

The FIDH said it would "hold the Iranian authorities responsible for the fate" of Faraj and Israel Sarkouhi.

U.S. slams death penalty

The U.S. State Department condemned on Friday Iran's decision to sentence to death two members of the minority Iranian Bahai group, and called for their immediate release.

"The United States government strongly condemns this action and calls on the government of Iran to release these men," said State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns.

"We urge the government of Iran to free all prisoners of conscience and to ensure freedom of religion and other basic human rights," Mr. Burns said.

According to the Bahai community in Washington, Iran's supreme court has upheld the death sentences for the two Bahais, Mussa Talibi and Zabihullah Mahrami, who were accused of renouncing the Muslim faith. There was no immediate confirmation from Iran.

The two men were tried separately by revolutionary tribunals in 1995 and 1996, according to the statement from the Washington-based Bahai group.

The Bahai community is Iran's largest religious minority, numbering some 300,000.

PNA protests Israeli ban on Hebron repairs

GAZA CITY (Agencies) — The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has protested against an Israeli army ban on a programme to renovate the historic old city of the West Bank town of Hebron, saying it threatens the peace process.

"The Palestinian leadership is concerned at the decision by the Israeli military authorities, which threatens a return to normal in the peace process," the PNA said in a statement issued after its weekly cabinet meeting held on Friday.

The statement referred to an Israeli military decree banning restoration work in the old city's non-Jewish sector which is under civilian control of the Palestinians.

The Palestinian Hebron Rehabilitation Committee (HRC) has launched a \$50 million plan to renovate some 120 houses in a bid to restore the old city, which was largely abandoned over the past decades and has fallen into decay.

But after the Israeli army banned the renovations last week, the cultural project has turned into a political tussle over the old city, which lies at the heart of the Israeli military-controlled zone of Hebron.

Jewish settlers claim the renovations are ultimately intended to surround their homes in the old city with "terrorists." Palestinians say the army ban paves the way for the settlers to expand their enclaves.

Israel handed Hebron over to Palestinian self-rule

on Jan. 17, when Palestinian police took control of most of the city. But the Israeli army remains in control of a zone covering the eastern fifth of Hebron.

The PNA statement said the Israeli decree was against the Hebron accord and would allow the Jewish state to expand its settlements.

It called on the co-sponsors of the peace process, Russia and the United States, and Arab states "to bring an immediate end to this policy in order to save the peace process."

Meanwhile, the Palestinian newspaper Al Ayyam said that senior Palestinian official Mahmoud Abbas secretly met Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai last week in occupied Jerusalem.

The two men discussed the next stages of the peace process, particularly regarding Palestinian prisoners held by Israel, the opening of a port and airport in Gaza and the final Israeli army withdrawals from the West Bank, the newspaper said.

Israel said on Friday it would begin to gradually reopen a main commercial thoroughfare in the Hebron to Palestinian vehicles next week. The Hebron accord states that the street, closed to Palestinian vehicles since February 1994, when a Jewish settler from a nearby settlement massacred 30 Palestinians at Al Ibrahim Mosque, will be gradually reopened within four months.

British team completes bomb probe in Egypt

CAIRO (AFP) — Two British police officers have completed a visit to Cairo to investigate reports that letter-bombs sent to the London-based Arabic daily Al Hayat were mailed from Egypt, the newspaper reported Saturday.

"The mission of the two officers lasted several days during which they were informed of the results of investigations carried out by the Egyptian security services," said Al Hayat, quoting Egyptian sources.

The paper said inquiries by the Egyptian authorities were focusing on "the Egyptian postal system as well as the links used on the packages and the type of paper used to make Egyptian postage stamps."

Edward Webb, press attaché at the British embassy here, refused to comment on the report.

"I am not in a position to reveal details of British-Egyptian cooperation in the security field," he told AFP.

Mr. Webb said last week that "a visit by police officers is planned as part of contacts going on between police offi-

cers in the two countries investigating the letter-bombs."

Egyptian Interior Minister Hassan Al Ali on Jan. 23 denied British police were coming to Egypt to make inquiries about the letter bombs, adding that such a mission would be "unacceptable."

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak has denied the letter-bombs sent to Al Hayat's offices in several countries were mailed from the northern Mediterranean city of Alexandria, whose postmark most of the letters bore.

Two security guards were injured when one of the letter-bombs exploded at Al Hayat's London headquarters, and one of the victims could lose the use of his right eye, according to Al Hayat.

The newspaper said 16 letter bombs bearing the Alexandria postmark were found since the spate of attacks started earlier this month: four in London, five in Washington, four at Al Hayat's New York office and three at the high-security U.S. prison of Leavenworth in the state of Kansas.

Iraq discovers ancient farming village in north

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraqi archaeologists have uncovered an ancient farming village dating back up to 11,000 years in Kurdistan, northern Iraq, an area already rich in archaeological wonders.

"We have been able to discover a new site, Nimrik, between 8,000 and 9,000 BC, which stands witness to Iraq's value as the cradle of civilisation," said Muayyed Said, director of the country's archaeological department.

Mr. Said said archaeologists had discovered a village of houses built of dried bricks near Mosul, 400 kilometres north of the capital, in a zone controlled by the Baghdad authorities.

"It shows that Iraq possesses one of the most ancient agricultural villages in the world," he told reporters.

Modern-day Mosul is the ancient Assyrian city of Nineveh.

Until now, the oldest site discovered by Iraqi diggers, dating back to 7,000 BC, was at Shermo in the east-

ern Kurdish province of Sulaymaniyah.

Mr. Said added that digs conducted by Iraqi archaeologists since the U.N. embargo was imposed after Baghdad's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, had also discovered instruments and tools made of rocks, some 2,000 centuries old.

"But we haven't discovered any skeletons," he said. According to official figures, Iraq has more than 10,000 archaeological sites, most of which have yet to be brought to light.

In 1993, a Kurdish official in northern Iraq, Ikrar Barzanji, estimated that there were some 700 sites in Kurdistan representing almost all the dynasties which reigned from the Mesopotamia and Sumerian eras to the Sassanid regime in the second century AD.

In particular he cited the agricultural village of Shermo, the caves of Shanidar, where a dozen skeletons of Neanderthal man were found, and the Assyrian site of Qalawka.

Column

Indians asked to fast for healthy life

NEW DELHI (AFP) — The Heart Care Foundation of India has urged people to fast once a week for a better and healthy life, the United News of India (UNI) reported Saturday. The group said denying food on a regular pattern once every seven days would induce growth hormones, provide immunity against diseases and a day of welcome rest to the digestive system. Fasting also leads to "quietude of mind," the foundation said. "But fasting should not be a casual affair to be observed only on certain religious occasions," it said in a statement. "It should rather be a weekly discipline."

Man cuts off penis after wife becomes pregnant for 9th time

JAKARTA (AFP) — An Indonesian man cut off his own penis with a kitchen knife after discovering his wife was pregnant for the ninth time, a news report said here Saturday. "He was extremely stressed at seeing his wife pregnant again, knowing that his income was inadequate to support his family," a friend of the man, a farmer, was quoted as saying by the Jakarta Post. Contraception is legal in Indonesia, where authorities have undertaken an education campaign about their use. But contraception is often opposed by religious leaders from both the Muslim community, the large majority of the country, and the Catholic community, which dominates several eastern islands.

Bus conductors go to temple for 'change'

CALCUTTA (AFP) — Calcutta's Hindu temples have seen a sudden, surprising increase in their congregations in recent months. Most of the new devotees are bus conductors. Calcutta State Transport Corporation (CSTC) managing director Sudhir Dey says the reason is simple. "We have 2,500 conductors, manning 1,000 buses. Each day they go to work with 40 coins each of 'bag money' to give the customers 'change'," he said. "Now there's a national shortage of small coins. To tide us over, we've been sending people to the city's Hindu temples to purchase the contents of their collection boxes." The CSTC coin crisis began in the middle of last year when the Reserve Bank of India, which used to provide it with 500,000 small denomination coins each week, reduced the quota to 300,000 because of a national dearth. CSTC Chairman A.K. Patnaik said: "We had no other option but to turn to the temples. We're looking for five (0.17 U.S. cents) or 10 paise coins in particular." "We also looking to revise our fare structures to minimise the use of small coins, by rounding up or downing our prices."

Coin forgers given 12 years

VERSAILLES, France (AFP) — A court in Versailles west of Paris, handed down 12-year jail terms early Saturday to two men who turned out almost two million fake 10 franc coins worth a theoretical \$4 million, from 1987 to 1993. The prosecutor had called for sentences of 15 years. Georges Lorrce, 63, and Patrick Vanfleteren, 40, were found guilty of making the coins at a workshop at Juziers near Versailles and of putting them into circulation in the Paris, Lyon and Nantes areas. Two other men were given five years, including four suspended, for "complicity" and helping to exchange the coins and two Yugoslavs, aged 42 and 53 were jailed for eight months for "covering up" the traffic.

Hashimoto and Fujimori agree to pursue dialogue with hostage-takers

TORONTO (AFP) — Peru's President Alberto Fujimori agreed with Japan's Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto Saturday to pursue preliminary dialogue with leftist rebels holding 72 hostages at the Japanese embassy residence in Lima.

The two also agreed Japan would play a much stronger role in negotiations between the Peruvian government and the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) guerrillas holding Japanese and South American hostages since Dec. 17.

It was clear Saturday that Mr. Hashimoto had persuaded Mr. Fujimori to take a softer line in dealing with the hostage-takers and to try to speed up the process toward direct negotiations with the guerrillas.

Mr. Fujimori admitted the recent efforts by security forces to harass the MRTA hostage-takers — with helicopter overflights and the blasting of loud music outside the compound — had been a mistake.

But he also reiterated his

insistence that there would be no release of MRTA members currently in prison.

"That may keep dialogue at a deadlock: rebel leader Nestor Cerna has said previously that if a release of prisoners is not at least on the agenda, there would be no meeting with negotiators."

In a joint statement, Mr. Hashimoto and Mr. Fujimori said they "agreed to promote the commencement of preliminary dialogues between the interlocutor of the Peruvian government and the representative of the MRTA group currently inside the Japanese ambassador's residence."

Mr. Hashimoto and Mr. Fujimori added that Japan would join the so-called commission of guarantors which is acting as a go-between between the guerrillas and Peru.

The two leaders said they "highly commended the continuing efforts of the commission of guarantors to realise the earliest possible direct dialogue between the interlocutor of the

Peruvian government and the representative of the MRTA group currently inside the Japanese ambassador's residence."

At a joint press conference with Mr. Fujimori, Mr. Hashimoto said the Peruvian president had committed himself "to a preliminary dialogue between the Peruvian government and the culprits."

And, said Mr. Hashimoto, Mr. Fujimori pledged: "He would do his utmost for the peaceful resolution of the crisis. He reaffirmed that as long as no harm is done to the hostages he will not use force to resolve the situation."

Earlier, Japanese officials said privately that Mr. Hashimoto had offered to help Peru negotiate with a third country to have it accept the rebels.

According to the officials, Mr. Hashimoto coupled the offer with a pledge to pump millions of dollars into Peru to help the country tackle its poverty problems — one of the complaints by the Tupac Amaru guerrillas holed up in the Japanese embassy residence.

Qadhafi launches prophecy by satellite

TUNIS (R) — Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi, dressed in a futuristic jacket, turned to satellite broadcasting to promote his latest book and assure watchers his views would conquer the world.

"The downtrodden will win whatever time this will take... 360 years, maybe 1,000 years," Colonel Qadhafi said at the launch of his book "Long Live The Nation of the Downtrodden."

Col. Qadhafi spoke from somewhere in Libya to Arab intellectuals at the Cairo International Book Fair on Thursday night via a satellite link. It was beamed across the Middle East and southern Europe.

"The Libyan revolution will win and its views will spread to the whole world... the downtrodden people all around the world will take power," said Col. Qadhafi, dressed with a tight brown jacket without a collar that was reminiscent of science fiction films.

A Syrian writer questioned Col. Qadhafi's timing: "Hitler had said he would succeed within 10 years, and he was defeated after five years. It would have been better if the brother (Qadhafi) had been more realistic."

But the Libyan leader compared himself to the prophets: "The Messiah, Mohammed,

Buddha succeeded even if they didn't have fleets with them. At the start was the word."

He predicted capitalism would collapse and be replaced by his "ideal city" without bourgeois governments, aggression,

armies, police, borders — "and no more radar that I now need to defend the country against America."

Col. Qadhafi previously wrote a green book about his ideas on government. In 1995 he produced a volume of short stories and essays entitled "The Village, The Village, The Earth, The Earth and the Suicide of the Astronaut" about modern society and Western hegemony over the Arab World.

Organisers said there would be a debate during the broadcast for his new book but instead intellectuals lectured and Col. Qadhafi ignored most of the issues they raised.

He intervened at the end, reading several pages of the small book in which he says "the sun will be shining, the birds singing and the angels congratulating" to announce the first light of the "State of the Downtrodden."

"I am greatly moved whenever I read again these pages," he said.

Israel demands \$23m

Number 6445

Arabat, N

on specif

Two leaders up

agreed to meet

Negot

Hebron

order to

asked

Link

after

about

Baron

Yemen

Arabat

very p

tion"

"We

group

Hebron

order to

asked

Link

after

about

Baron

Yemen

Arabat

very p

tion"

"We

group

Hebron

order to

asked

Link

after

about

Baron

Yemen

Arabat

very p

tion"

"We

group

Hebron

order to

asked

Link

after

about

Baron

Yemen

Arabat

very p

tion"

"We

group

Hebron

order to

asked

Link